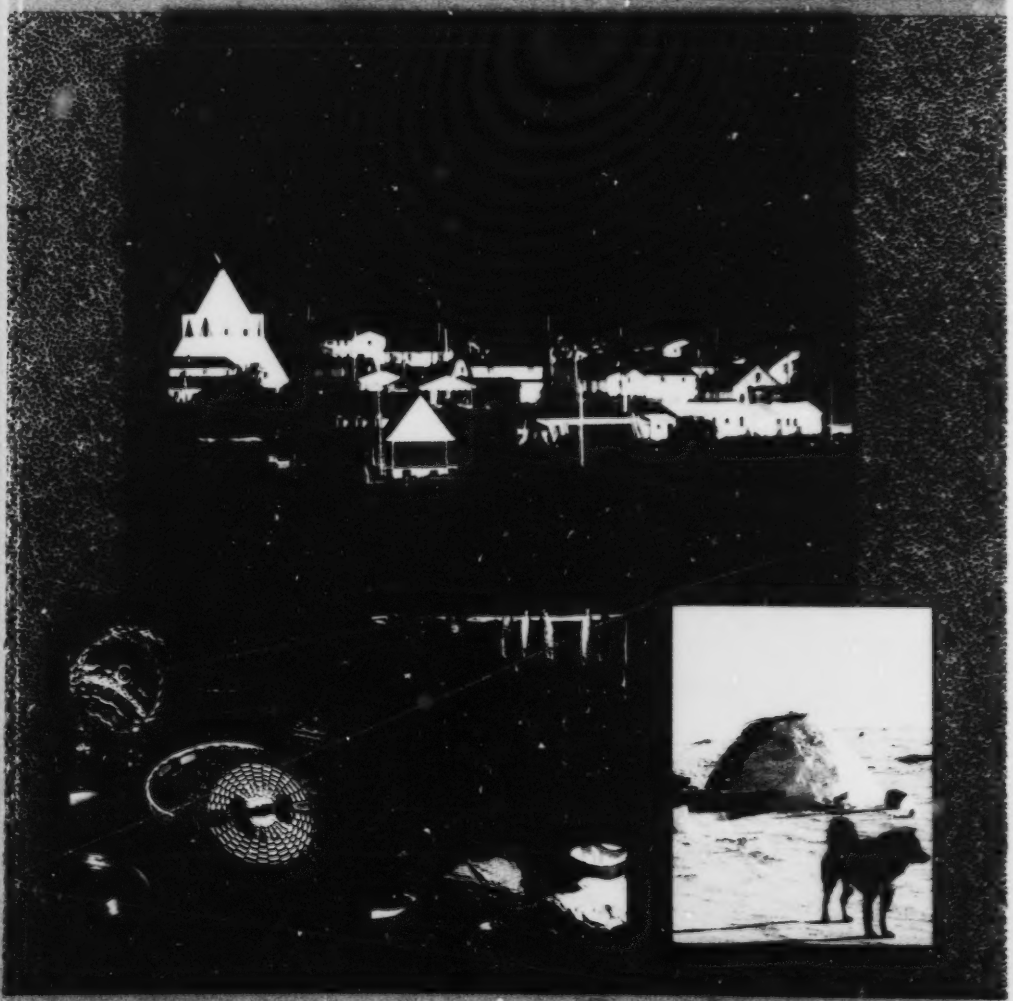
Native Peoples of Québec



Québec

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Foreword

On the occasion of the 1534-1984 celebrations, the Secrétariat des activités gouvernementales en milieu amérindien et inuit (SAGMAI) has produced this publication on the native peoples to give particular recognition to their presence and their belonging to Québec society.

The text describes their origins, how their ancestors lived, their traditional dress, their myths and customs. It then goes on to discuss some aspects of their current way of life: their communities, arts and crafts, and projects of a cultural and socio-economic nature. The nine Amerindian nations are located in the regions of Montréal, Sorel, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Québec City, James Bay, Schefferville, Côte-Nord, Haute-Mauricie, and Gaspé. The Inuit live further north, in Nouveau-Québec.

This brochure also contains magnificent illustrations. It is the first publication of its kind in Québec and we hope that it does honour to the 60 000 aboriginal people in our midst.

The Associate Secretary General
of the Executive Council

Éric Gourdeau,
Responsible for SAGMAI

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The Amerindians

Modern research has shown that the Amerindians originated in Asia. Several thousand years ago, according to the theory, nomadic hunters from the north of Asia followed the caribou into the northern regions of this continent.

Leaving eastern Siberia, they followed the migrations of the caribou herds into Alaska, across the Bering Strait. Little by little, these hardy hunters spread themselves over the entire American continent, lured by lands which were more hospitable than the far north of Canada or Alaska.

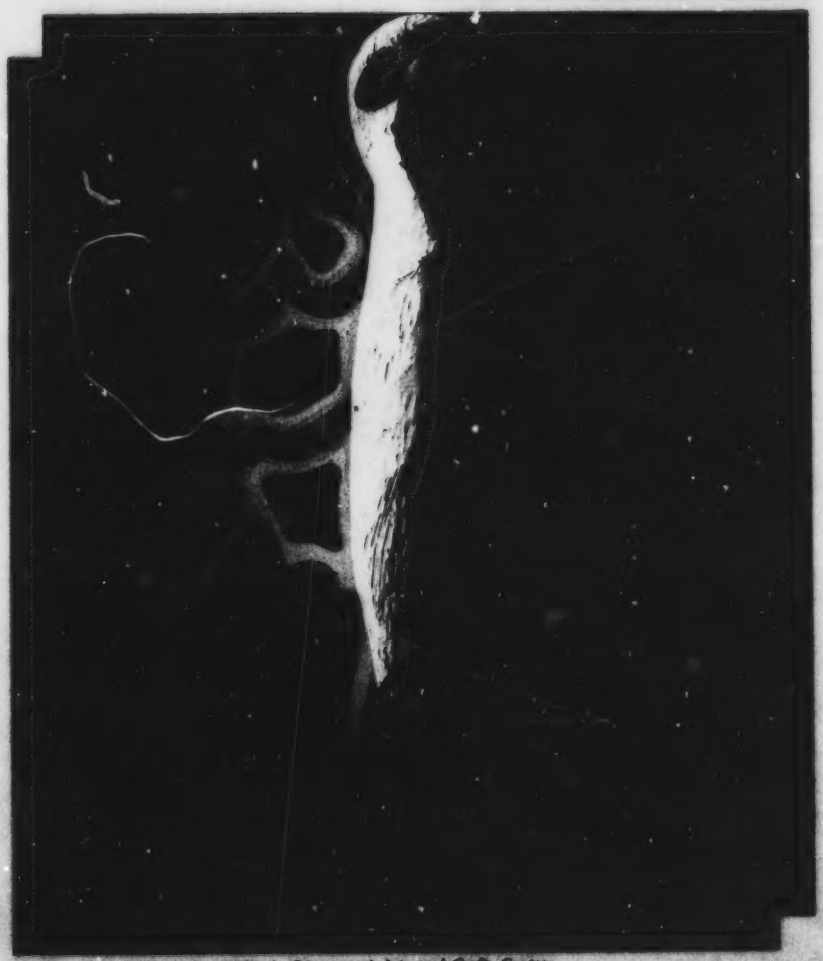
The Asiatic nomads first migrated to this continent over 40 000 years ago. Two other major waves of migration took place some 25 000 and 10 000 years ago. In each case, the new arrivals took time adjusting to their surroundings: their adaptation was not easy.

It is estimated that in the XVII^e^ century, some 20 000 Amerindians were scattered over Canada divided into ten large linguistic families: the Algonquian, Iroquoian, Sioux, Athapaskan, Kootenay, Salish, Wakashan, Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit. Each of these large families was further divided into numerous sub-groups as a result of migration, isolation and different living conditions.

In Québec, two major cultural spheres existed side by side: the Algonquian and the Iroquoian. While the Iroquoian, living in small tribes in the fertile region between Québec and Lake Ontario, had developed a settled way of life based on agriculture, the Algonquins were nomads who lived by hunting, fishing and gathering wild fruit. Included in the Iroquoians were the Hurons and the Mohawks. The Algonquians took in the Abenakis, Algonquins, Attikameks, Crees, Micmacs, Montagnais and Naskapis.

Chapter 1

The Abenakis



Totem pole in front of the Wôlinak (Bécancour) Arts and Crafts Centre
Photo: Paul-Émile Roux

Workshop of sculptor Fred Watso in Odanak
Photo: Paul-Émile Rioux

The Abenakis in the past

Beginnings of the colony

A mention of the Odanak and Wôlinak (Bécancour) Abenakis will probably bring to mind the existence of these small villages near Sorel and Trois-Rivières, bearing witness to a settlement dating back to the very beginnings of New France. The Abenakis formed close ties with the French in order to defend the colony against the expansionist designs of the British in New England.

The Abenaki migration into Québec territory began around 1676; at that time they came to live in a Sillery mission, near Québec City. In 1684 most Abenakis abandoned Sillery, under the leadership of Fathers Bigot and Gassot, to settle near the Chaudière River falls where they founded one of the largest Abenaki villages, with a population of 1 000. Other groups occupied the upper reaches of the Chaudière River and the shores of Lac Mégantic, which the Abenakis call Namesokantsik (place where there are a lot of fish). About 1700 another migration began, and a fairly important one strategically: the Abenakis were encouraged to go settle in Odanak and Wôlinak. This latter location became populated mainly in 1704 when Monsieur de Beauharnois, the intendant of New France, invited the Abenakis living in Anmesokkanti on the Sandy River (Maine) to emigrate to the Saint Lawrence shores.

These migrations which punctuated the history of New France must not allow us to forget the characteristics of the Amerindians' pre-Columbian history.

Pre-Columbian period

The name "Abenaki" is in fact an alteration of the expression "Wabanaki", meaning "land of the dawn" or "country lying to the east". The Abenakis are part of the Algonquian linguistic family. They formerly populated an immense territory from the present New England States to the Maritime Provinces.

The Odanak Abenakis lived in a huge region bounded by the Merrimack River which passed through New Hampshire and Massachusetts, to finally flow into the Atlantic Ocean and Lake Champlain. In fact historians often distinguish the Abenakis of the West, who settled in the present-day village of Odanak, from the Abenakis of the East, who lived in Main, near the Kennebec and Androscoggin rivers. This geographical distinction overlapped a linguistic differentiation, as these Amerindians did not speak identical dialects.

Arriving in Odanak on Highway 132 not far from Sorel.
Photo: *Paul-Émile Rioux*

It would seem that members of the Sokoki tribe, who populated the area by the Connecticut River, were the ancestors of the Odanak Abenakis. Their nation was made up of several groups: the Cowasucks at Newbury (Vermont), the tribes from the upper reaches of the Merrimack River, the Winnepesaukees and Penacooks at Concord (New Hampshire), the people of Amoskeag (Manchester in New Hampshire), the Southegans, Nashaways and Pawtucketts (Lowell in Massachusetts), the Naamkeeks at Salem (Massachusetts). According to several accounts, these Abenaki peoples united sometime during the 18th century, near the Missisquoi River and Lake Champlain.

The Wôlinak Abenakis, better known as Bécancour Abenakis, are mostly descendants of the Malécites, a tribe which lived along the Saint John River in New Brunswick, formerly called Acadia under the French régime.

The territory of the Abenakis of the West was bounded from east to west by the Lake Champlain Valley, the Green Mountains, the Connecticut River Valley and the White Mountains. To the south the Abenaki lands were bordered by Lake Winnepesaukee and the Merrimack River Valley. Winters were cold and snow fell for four to five months of the year, but summers were hot with a growing season of about 140 days.

Forests in this region included several types of trees: white pine, red and black spruce, cedar (thuya). The Abenakis of the West primarily hunted deer, moose and black bear for subsistence purposes. Beaver, muskrat, mink, otter, marten and fox were the most highly prized species for their furs. The Abenaki hunting grounds also abounded in game such as rabbits, hares and squirrels, not to mention the various types of birds.

The population of the Abenakis of the West during the Pre-Columbian period is very difficult to determine. Epidemics, wars with the Iroquois between 1650 and 1680, and numerous skirmishes between the Abenakis of the West and the Colony of Massachusetts drastically diminished the Abenaki tribes. A reasonable estimate of the Abenaki population before these events would be five thousand.

Ancestral way of life

Subsistence activities of the Abenakis obviously varied with the changing seasons. In springtime they first collected maple sap in bark containers to make sugar or syrup. The season was also favourable for fishing, and the Abenakis took advantage of this to lay in an ample supply of fish which they either consumed immediately or smoked to stock up as a reserve of food. Instruments and implements used for fishing were extremely varied: spears thrown from the shore or a canoe, torches lit in the night to attract fish, hooks and nets.

The Abenakis were also farmers. Among other products, they harvested green vegetables and wild potatoes. In May they planted corn, beans, squash and tobacco. During the summer subsistence activities mainly consisted of weeding and maintaining the fields, fishing and, above all, gathering blueberries and a great variety of other berries.

Towards the end of the summer season the Abenakis harvested medicinal plants and stocked up on nuts and chestnuts.

Come fall, the Abenakis hunted migratory aquatic birds, using bows and arrows or trapping them with nets. They also killed a good number of pigeons which flew over their hunting grounds when migrating south in search of winter shelter. In addition, the Abenakis began hunting deer, bear and moose at this time of year.

Abenaki dress

Characteristically, the men wore breeches, a garment made of tanned leather, as was the belt that tied around the waist. They wore moccasins made of moose skin. During the coldest period of winter, moccasins were lined with tanned leather or rabbit skin, and a second pair of knee-high moccasins was worn over them.

The Abenakis also used leggings up to the thighs attached with a strap. To protect themselves from the harshness of winter, both men and women wrapped themselves in coats made from two panels of moose skin. These coats, which were usually decorated with painted designs or patterns, often had detachable sleeves.

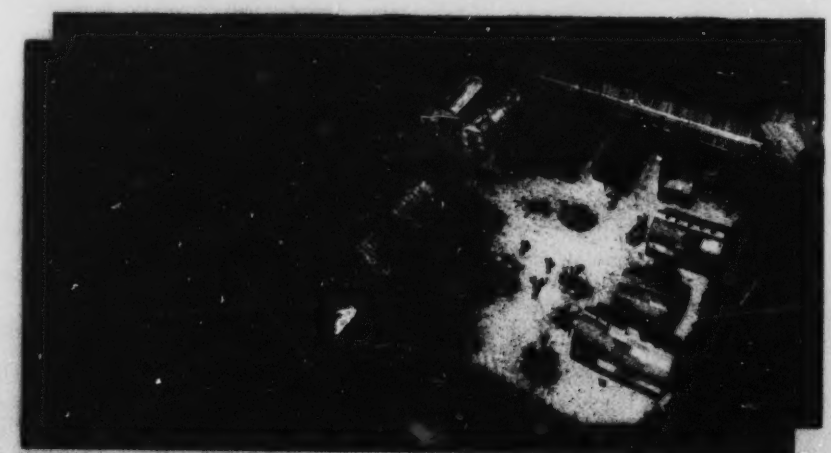
Young men wore their hair long and hanging, whereas married men braided it into a bun on the top of their heads and held it in place with a thong. Women either left their hair down, with nothing in it, or plaited it into two braids which they twisted into a bun on the top of their heads and fastened with a cord trimmed with pendants at both ends.

Both men and women wore fur hats. The dresses worn by women were made from beaver skins.

Besides their clothing, the Abenakis carried a whole range of other articles with them. First there was a knife protected by a sheath that was attached at breast-level, then a wooden cup fastened with a leather strap at waist-level. They also carried small leather bags in which they kept what was needed to make a fire. Among other items should be mentioned the pipe and amulets representing their beneficent animal spirits.

Myths and traditions

The Abenakis accord a good deal of importance to stories about the creation of the world. Their myths or legends present a great number of characters, but the one with the most prestige is certainly the creator of living beings: Tabaldak. Aside from the beings created by Tabaldak, on-



Miniature replica of the Abenaki fort (1700), collection piece in the Odanak museum.
Photo: *Jean Fiset*

ly one, who had exceptional powers, was procreated through his own initiative from the dust that Tabaldak had touched: Odziozo.

Most of the legendary events took place in the Lake Champlain region, which the Abenakis call Bitawbak. Odziozo actually created this lake to complete his work. The Odanak Abenakis relate that Odziozo was so happy with the result that he turned into stone so that he could better gaze upon the landscape. Up until 1940 the people frequently took offerings to this rock which is called Dundes Rock.

A great number of other myths tell the story of Odziozo's spectacular accomplishments. Among the numerous legends can be noted his fight against water creatures (Manôge Masak) on the Missisquoi River, his conquest of the thunder gods which took place on an island in Lake Champlain, and the creation of various geographical landmarks near Lake Champlain, for instance Split Rock and the Otter Creek falls.

According to Abenaki accounts about the creation of the world, man was created by Tabaldak. He first sculpted the shapes of a man and a woman out of stone, but not liking the result, he destroyed his work. He then started again by carving the trunk of a tree, thus fashioning the first human beings who are the ancestors of the Amerindians.

Abenaki cosmogony does not make a clear distinction between animate and inanimate objects. Therefore, what may seem « inanimate » to white people, a rock for instance, has an inner power and life for the Abenakis. The special role of the shaman or medicine man stems from this particular conception of the natural environment. The shaman possesses the art of divination. He can determine the hunting grounds where the Abenakis should stay if they wish to find game. His powers also allow him to predict future events and practise healing.

The Abenakis are also particularly concerned about respect for the natural envi-

Odanak craftsmen favour the technique of weaving for making their baskets. Here we see Émilia Msadakuis preparing a small basket made of ash strips and sweet grass.
Photo: *Paul-Émile Roux*

One of the stages in felling an ash tree consists in beating the log with an axe to remove strips that will be polished and used to make baskets.
Photo: Paul-Émile Rieux

ronment. The animals they hunt actually have mythical « spirits » or « guardians » which the Amerindians must honour if they wish to kill game. For these reasons, a number of precepts which must be observed are established for hunting or consuming game. The animal's bones are kept and receive special treatment. Incense produced from the fat of the slain animal is burned before meals. Similarly, wasting food is strictly prohibited. Other rules are established with regard to cultivating corn or squash and obtaining medicinal plants. This explains the custom of burning tobacco at planting and harvest time. Similarly, prayers are regularly chanted for important events.

Thus various ceremonies accompanied public events which brought the entire community together. Dances and rituals were celebrated for marriages, visits from the Chiefs of other tribes, the first corn harvest, declarations of war and funerals. Several secular dances were performed, and some are still in use today: the dances of the Knife, Pipe and Eagle are among the best known.

The Abenakis today

Lay-Out of the villages

Odanak

It was in 1700 that the village of Odanak was founded on the shores of the Saint-François River. Its location changed several times before the present site was developed in 1715. Odanak is now located near Saint-François-du-Lac, on the south shore of the Saint-François River, and Pierreville, a small municipality on the north shore of the same body of water.

Odanak still retains significant evidence of its past. From the shadow of a pine grove, the church overlooks the Saint-François River. The stone walls of this building are the sole remains of a Catholic church built in 1828 and destroyed by lightning in 1900. The museum stands near the church, occupying the former school run by the Soeurs grises de la Croix.

The village is made up of charming little houses along the banks of the Saint-François River. It has a population of 204, while the Band itself, including the Abenakis living outside the village, has about 600 members. The territory of Odanak has an area of approximately 607 hectares.

Although residential construction is active, with an average of five new houses a year, the emphasis is more on renovating existing houses. Other work is also performed in urban development, and special effort is put into making the village more attractive.

Wôlinak (Bécancour)

Founded in 1704, the village of Wôlinak is located twenty kilometres east of Trois-Rivières. The Band has about 100 members, 80 of them living in the village itself. The village, which covers a total area of 57 hectares, lies on the south shore, along the Bécancour River. An interesting feature of the village of Bécancour is its policy of remaining open to and welcoming the various Amerindian communities of Québec. It is hoped that cultural exchanges will be fostered and that Amerindians from far-off regions who have to live near urban centres will be able to reside in an Amerindian village.

As in Odanak, residents of the village accord a great deal of importance to matters of urban planning and development. In addition, the village has a superb pine plantation that is twenty years old and numbers about 35 000 trees. At the heart of the plantation stands a shelter which is to be renovated. This building could possibly be used as a place for exhibiting

handicraft items from different Amerindian communities; it could just as easily become a relay post for cross-country skiiers passing through the plantation.

Considering the relatively small population in Wôlinak, residential construction is fairly substantial. In the past few years, three houses a year on average have been built in Wôlinak. Moreover, and unlike Odanak, the emphasis is put on residential construction rather than renovation.

Handicrafts

The production of Abenaki handicrafts is diversified, including the use of duffel, embroidery, leather work, beading, ash basketwork, corn masks, furs, and the production of carved pipes.

Basketry has long been recognized as one of the most characteristic handicraft activities in Odanak. Basketwork items formerly had very specific functions. The woven baskets were actually used for gathering fruit or vegetables and keeping food. The variety of materials used at the time is worthy of note: elm or birch bark, cedar roots, ash splinters...

The craftsmen of Odanak favour the technique of weaving for making their baskets. Most of the time they use splinters or fragments of ash which, after being broken off the tree trunk, are polished, dried, dyed and woven.

Preparing the raw material used for making the baskets requires a great number of stages. Men choose the tree, remove the bark and beat the ash to break off strips which are then polished. Women take over the dying process and weave the baskets.

Most of the time they use wooden moulds shaped like the baskets; they then choose the appropriate weaving technique.

The last step consists in decorating the handicraft article to give it its own originality. A horizontal strip of ash can be woven over the vertical splinters and

Corn mask, made by Marie-Jeanne Gill
Photo: *Paul-Émile Roux*

looped at regular intervals, resulting in raised ornamental spikes. Another decorative technique is sometimes used — « the eye of God ». Thin strips are woven into the shape of diamond points and applied to the basket's edges and handles in the final assembly. Last, sweet grass is frequently used, allowing for a subtle variation of shapes and colours. Ash basketwork is the most popular type of handicraft and a considerable source of income.

In fall and winter, when the men left Odanak for a few weeks to go hunting and trapping, the women and children stayed home and made baskets. Come springtime, the whole family left Odanak and went to the United States, where a small booth was set up somewhere near a tourist area to attract buyers.

At the very beginning of the 20th century, far-reaching changes occurred in the basketwork trade when merchants appeared who realized the profit they could make from an overall strategy for marketing these handicraft goods. They were mainly dealers from Montréal, New York and Toronto, although some of them came from Pierreville. They supplied the Abenakis with raw materials required for making the baskets and then sold the finished product throughout Canada and the United States. They guaranteed the Abenakis a steady income, while encouraging them to make baskets all year long. Some other handicraft items interested the dealers: small-scale models of wooden canoes, snowshoes, miniature replicas of toboggans... One of the results of creating this economic monopoly was the end of the Abenakis' trips to the United States.

From the 1950s on, the consumer demand for baskets declined, to the advantage however of other handicraft items. The marketing system described above lasted until the mid-1960s.

Economic development

Today handicrafts occupy an important position in the activities of Odanak residents. A profit-making corporation was

Traditional dance performed by Abenaki dancers.
Photo: Jacques Nadeau

Traditional Abenaki dress, collection piece in the Odanak Museum.
Photo: Paul-Emile Roux

created in 1983 with the purpose of making permanent jobs available for craftsmen. The corporation produces various items: jackets, leather pendants, baskets made of ash... Several sales outlets have been established in Montréal, Québec City, the Laurentians and the United States. The corporation expects its turnover to increase considerably with the important events of 1984 (Québec 1534-1984, the Pope's visit). Its sales already produce an annual income of 200 000 dollars.

The village of Odanak also has a sewing shop, a small private business set up a few years ago and essentially employing women.

In addition to handicraft marketing activities, the village of Wôlinak has an industry — *Abenaki Plastics* — a business which has been in existence for the last ten years. Three employees work there permanently, and an average of five individuals are hired at the height of the ordering season (six months of the year). Moreover, it has just perfected a very light fibreglass canoe (10 to 15 kg) which is proving highly successful. The production capacity of Abenaki Plastics is four hundred canoes a year. The clientele of the business includes Sweden and the United States, and the company's turnover is $200 000 a year. It should be mentioned that in addition to canoes, Abenaki Plastics manufactures water tanks, greenhouses and fibreglass galleries.

Cultural heritage: Ensuring the continuity

Artists

Marie-Jeanne Gill has long been recognized as one of the Odanak residents who has a precise knowledge about the techniques for making masks. Several times she has taught the procedures to be followed in making the various Abenaki masks, both in Odanak and in Wôlinak.

Mrs. Gill has specialized in the making of two types of masks. The first one, which is called a « sun mask », is a symbol of abundance in the Abenaki tradition. A structure made of fine strips of ash is initially mounted, and dried leaves from ears of corn are woven on top. The second, the « corn mask », also requires an ash structure, on top of which braids of sweet grass are woven. The hair of the mask is made from small curls of corn leaves, inside of which tobacco is hidden. The eyebrows are made from the fibrous roots of corn.

Adrien Panadis is an Abenaki artist who carves sculptures and ceremonial totem poles. His sources of inspiration stem in all likelihood from the totems on the West Coast of North America which identified the guardian animal of the tribe and held magic powers (healing, foretelling future events...) for the Amerindians.

The ground floor of the museum has a few of his sculptures on exhibit: « The Offering », made in 1968; « The Virgin » (1963); « The Grizzly Bear » (1965). The grounds of the Catholic church contain a sculpture representing « The Event of Fatima » (1969), and another one calling up the scene of « Adam and Eve and the Serpent ». Finally, three little sculptures by Adrien Panadis are housed in the small chapel built in 1945.

In 1983 Odanak unfortunately lost one of its great artists: Guy Sioui. He carved pipes out of steatite and chiselled silver jewellery, taking his inspiration from traditional art of the Abenaki, Huron and Iroquois cultures. His pieces are found in renowned exhibition centres, such as the National Museum of Man in Ottawa and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Some shops also sell his artistic creations to the public at large.

Young Abenaki girl from Odanak.
Photo: Paul-Émile Bouin

He was chosen along with thirteen other Amerindian colleagues to sculpt a bas relief which was inserted into a wall of the House of Commons in Ottawa. The part created by Guy Sioui is made of steatite and represents the Amerindians from Eastern Canada.

Guy Sioui's work is distinguished by its originality and aesthetic quality. Carved in shapes recalling Amerindian mythology, his sculpted pipe bowls often represent heads of birds or traditional motifs. The pipe stems are trimmed with feathers. His silver and gold jewellery often takes the form of an arrow head, an eagle, a turtle.

The museum

The Abenaki Museum in Odanak was created at the beginning of the 1960s by the Odanak Historical Society, in collaboration with J. Rémi Dolan, a missionary.

Housed in a former elementary school of the reserve, the museum contains a good number of important articles which bear witness to Abenaki history, cultural traditions and customs. Although originally this museum was a place where residents of the village came to offer objects that belonged to parents or grandparents, today the Abenaki Museum has grown considerably in size and its collection has become richer.

Fourteen rooms are open to the public. On the ground floor there are Abenaki sculptures, Amerindian masks made of corn husks and sweet grass, and superb traditional costumes. In one of the rooms the visitor can observe a true-to-life reconstruction of the Abenaki nation's ancestral way of life, representing the day-to-day environment of these hunters and gatherers. Whether it be the hunt and animals sought after, the steps in building a canoe, or the peculiarities of bark teepees, the unit is distinguished by the originality of its themes and the educational character of the exhibition, which is full of valuable information about the meaning and use of the articles on display. Thus most of these items are an integral part of the plant or animal environment which give them a more concrete value.

Furthermore, the special status reserved for basketwork within the Odanak Museum collection must not be ignored. In the basement the visitor will find basket moulds, blocks of ash for preparing the splinters of wood, and various other things used in making ash and sweet grass baskets or containers.

Finally it should be mentioned that one room is completely devoted to a reproduction of the Abenaki fort built at the beginning of the 18th century to defend the French colony. Other rooms present evidence (photographs, objects...) concerning important events in the life of this community. The Odanak Museum collection also contains unique documents with regard to the history of the Abenaki language, including grammar and song books.

The historical society

The Odanak Historical Society was founded in 1965 to create and manage the Abenaki Museum of Odanak. The objectives of this institution are to run the museum and preserve the Abenaki culture.

The Historical Society of Odanak has a library affiliated with the central lending library of La Mauricie. Among other subjects, this library includes books on Amerindian culture.

Mikwôbait Cultural Association

This association has existed since 1982. It is concerned with all aspects of the Abenaki culture and takes an active part

in community life in the village. Just as an example, in the last few years it has carried out research on the Abenaki language by collecting linguistic data from various speakers in the village. This work enabled the members to compile preliminary documents, resulting in the development of a basic manual used in the courses given to young Amerindians. This programme is also offered in Wôlinak. In addition, through the initiative of the parents committee of Odanak, introductory courses to the Abenaki culture are offered to non-Indian students at Pierreville Elementary School in order to make them aware of the specific characteristics of their neighbours' culture.

The Abenaki church

The Abenakis came to live in the Saint-François region sometime during the second half of the 17th century. At that time they went to the parish church located on Pointe du Moulin. When an official mission was founded for the Abenakis on the land belonging to the seigniory of Jean Crevier, a church was also built for them.

In 1759 the village church and the Jesuit residence were burned down by Major Rogers' troup. In fact, the entire village was set afire by the English army as punishment against the Abenakis because of their alliance with the French.

After the 1759 fire the Abenakis erected a small wood church, using the old bell from the Saint-François parish. Although they were very poor, they all had to join forces to complete the construction. On May 24, 1819, this church was also destroyed by fire. The rebuilding work began in 1828. The new church, made of stone, was 21 metres long and 10 metres wide, and contained a stone sacristy measuring 1.5 by 6 metres. It was completed in 1831.

During the 19th century Protestantism met with a certain amount of success in Odanak. An Anglican church was built in 1866, and a vicarage in 1867. In 1884 Peter Emett, an Abenaki and a member of the Advent Christian Conference, erected a small chapel where he could preach the gospel.

In 1899 a new presbytery was added near the Catholic church, but the church was once again destroyed on July 17, 1900 — this time by a fire caused by lightning. However, the stone walls were spared and the following year the rebuilding of this church was begun. Father Gonzague, with some generous financial support from an American senator of Abenaki descent, Matthew Stanley Quay, completed its restoration in 1909.

Abenakis from the village of Odanak and Bécancour were in touch with the French people of New France from early on. Rediscovering Abenaki history is simultaneously recalling the hazards of the colonial wars between New France and New England, the long Abenaki migration from the Atlantic coast to lands with milder climates and the coexistence of the villages of Odanak and Bécancour with Trois-Rivières, Pierreville, Notre-Dame-du-Lac. It is also, when walking through exhibition halls in the Odanak Museum, observing the wealth of the Abenaki past and further appreciating the present efforts of these two villages which are using all possible ways and means to promote the development of their culture.

Chapter 2

The Algonquins

Grandmother Philomène Gunn and her daughter at their winter camp near lac des Oies.
Photo: *Jean Fiset*

Pikogan.
Photo: *Bernard Beaupré*

The Algonquins of Québec — the "Anishnabe" or "Nishnabi", meaning the "True Men" — are part of the vast Algonquian linguistic family. The population's mother tongue is the Algonquin language. Today over 4 000 people live in nine villages of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region — Grand-Lac-Victoria, Lac-Simon, Winneway, Pikogan and Témiscamingue, in the case of the northern Algonquins; and Kipawa, Wolf Lake, Lac-Rapide and Maniwaki, for the southern Algonquins. The population today is very close to what it was at the beginning of the 17th century, although down through the centuries epidemics and wars diminished the nation considerably.

History of the Algonquins

The ancestral territory of the Algonquins, according to tales from their oral tradition and archeological data, was the Atlantic (east) coast. Travelling from east to west via the Ottawa River, they settled in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, where they live today.

In this area they have contacts with the Attikameks and Crees of Québec and the Ojibways of Ontario. Cultural exchanges, alliances and marriages occur from one nation to another or one clan to another under a patriarchal system. However, in the course of their history they experienced several wars against their sworn enemies the Iroquois, as the latter were seeking to extend their hunting territory under pressure from the fur traders.

During the 17th and 18th centuries the Jesuit missionaries' attempts at evangelizing the Algonquins were only semi-successful; they could not counter the nomadic nature of the Algonquin population. The Sulpicians followed in the Jesuits' footsteps, founding missions to keep the Amerindians near them and thus exercise a certain amount of control over them.

In the 19th century the Oblates and secular priests took over. Before permanent missions were set up the Oblates travelled on a seasonal basis to visit the Algonquins within their territory. Until the mid-19th century the Algonquins remained reticent toward Catholicism and continued to practise their ancestors' religion.

The settling process was permanently brought about with the creation of Indian reserves in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most villages were established near urban centres where work was available and, simultaneously, traditional subsistence activities — hunting, fishing and trapping — could be practised on an occasional basis.

Traditional subsistence activities

Traditional way of life

The traditional way of life was based on hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering. Subsistence activities were practised in accordance with the changing seasons and in harmony with the environment.

The fall hunting period was particularly demanding and produced a whole series of tasks which were divided according to sex. First of all, until the men returned from the hunt the women attended to their families' needs at the camp which served as base. They hunted small game (hare and partridge, for instance), fished, cooked, carried water and gathered dry wood.

Once the men returned to camp they prepared tools for trapping and chopped wood for the winter, while the women tanned hides, made clothing and prepared the meat to be eaten during the winter. The fruits of a good hunt provided the entire family with food and clothing. Sharing of the catch among families was a well established custom with the Algonquins resulting in a fraternal relationship rather than a dependency.

The summer season was a time for large gatherings during which marriages were celebrated. This period was favourable for exchanges of all types, and tales of the hunt were brought back to life. The products of fishing activities allowed for a variation in the peoples' diet, and the gathering of fruit provided the vitamin C which was almost completely lacking from their winter food supply.

Sustenance

As has just been seen, the Algonquins' means of subsistence were the product of their traditional activities — big and small game hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering. It seems that corn and tobacco were cultivated, but only to a limited extent, as the Algonquins were primarily nomads and not a sedentary people devoted to agriculture. Their tools, which

Lac-Simon.
Photo: Prelle

were made of stone (knives, for instance), wood (snow shovels and spoons) and bone (scrapers, depilatory instruments and needles), were as diversified as the traditional activities they applied to.

Housing and transportation

Birch bark was the main raw material used for housing. It covered a framework made of poles, and this covering could be rolled, transported and reused from one camp site to another. In addition, birch bark was used in making several types of containers for preserving food or drawing water and in building canoes, one of the main means of transportation.

Clothing

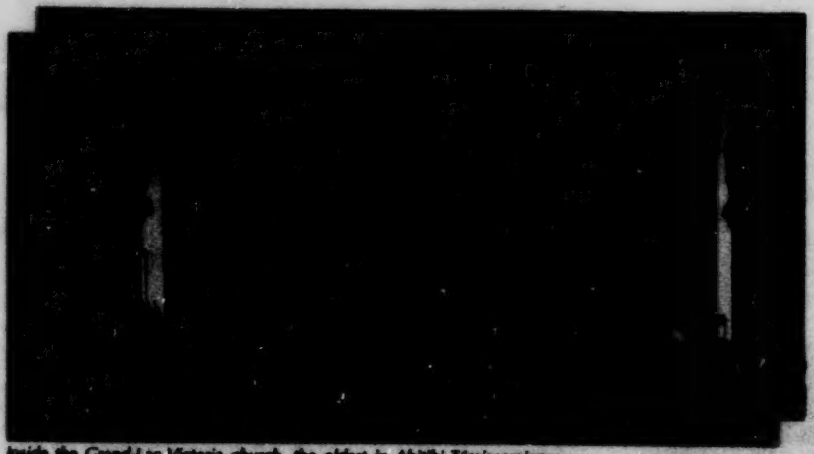
Moose skins were treated and cut for making women's dresses and skirts, men's leggings, mittens and moccasins. The women spent long hours embroidering clothes and fineries; for instance, the bracelets, necklaces, earrings and headbands which completed their dress.

The fur trade

In the early 17th century Champlain's presence and the ensuing fur trade along the Ottawa River brought about benefits for the Algonquins. Since the French actually preferred trading with the Hurons and the latter had to travel via the Ottawa River, carrying skins from James Bay, the Great Lakes and the Abitibi region, a high right of passage was charged by the Algonquins. Iroquois attacks on the Algonquins obliged them to take refuge with the Montagnais and Attikameks. Once peace was reestablished in 1701 they returned to live along the Ottawa. However, the fur trade was henceforth carried on with the Crees in James Bay itself, which meant it was no longer possible for the Algonquins to demand a right of passage. Therefore, for over fifty years they acted as middlemen in the fur trade between Hurons and the French.

Religion

The Algonquin religious beliefs and practices were a result of shamanism. The



Inside the Grand-Lac-Victoria church, the oldest in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
Photo: *Bernard Beaupré*

Tom Rankin, a very active trapper, is showing us the frame of a snowshoe; he teaches the techniques of making snowshoes to the youth of Pikogan.
Photo: Jean Fiset

symbol explaining the universe was the "Tree of Life", which was considered to be sacred.

The shaman, who was commonly called the medicine man, was the mediator between the world of mankind (the known world) and the universe (the unknown). He acted both as a healer and soothsayer. He practised his rites with figurines or herbs in a tent known as the "shaking tent", where he made contact with the spirits of gods, men or animals.

The Algonquins' daily acts also included rites which were endowed with a religious connotation. For instance, several rites were practised before, during and after the hunt to pay respects to the slain animal's spirit, ensure fruitful hunts in the future, and thus avoid famine or even death.

Social, cultural and economic characteristics of each village

Maniwaki

The Algonquins settled in this village in the middle of the 19th century. Lying 128 kilometres north of Hull, it makes up the largest community, with its 1 000 residents occupying 260 houses.

The village's economic activity hinges on several businesses: the supermarket where, with Band Council authorization, the sale of liquor and beer is legal; a gas station; a hairdressing salon; and a taxi service. Three other projects are under consideration: building a hotel with a bar, reforesting around the village over a ten-year period and obtaining a concession from the neighbouring ZEC (Controlled Harvesting Zone) which would result in the construction of a wood-processing factory.

The Band school, which attends to its own administration, offers instruction up to the second year of high school. In 1985 this will be increased to the fourth year. A school for handicapped persons operates independently and has an appropriate transportation service.

Cultural activities are numerous and are available at several locations: the youth centre, the community centre and the handicrafts shop whose name, "Wadub", is evocative of spruce roots. In the summer of 1984 a library which will serve the entire community will be built near the school and the lake.

A local detachment of the Amerindian police maintains law and order in the village.

Lac-Rapide

Founded in 1962, this village is located some 150 kilometres north of Maniwaki. Its 255 inhabitants occupy approximately 60 houses.

It is no longer possible to build in Lac-Rapide for lack of space. One of the community's major concerns is increasing its territory.

Education is offered at the elementary school level, and a committee attends to schooling matters specifically. It is made up of a councilor from the Band Council, a teacher and three parents.

Lac-Rapide has a handicrafts shop where clothing made from moose skin is available.

Cultural activities include a softball tournament, a perch-fishing contest during the summer and a moose-hunting competition in the fall.

Kipawa

This village is located ten kilometres from Témiscamingue. Its some 190 members occupy about 30 houses.

The children study outside the village and the Band Council is responsible for their transportation. The community has indicated its interest in having its own school within the village.

The village's infrastructures are made up of a number of buildings which house various activities: the trapper's boutique, the community clinic, the Amerindian police station and the Band Council's office which is adjacent to the Chief's residence.

A recreation committee attends to organizing cultural events for student entertainment during the summer.

It is impossible to speak of Kipawa without mentioning the important contribution of one of its distinguished citizens: Kermot A. Moore. He won renown through both his political involvement and his historical research on the Algonquin people.

Kermot A. Moore was born in 1926 in the southern part of the Témiscamingue region. Before becoming involved politically, he was a trapper and a lumberjack, and then worked in the mining and aviation fields. In 1971 he founded the Laurentian Alliance of Métis and Non-status Indians, now known as the Québec Native People's Alliance. He continued his political activities with the Native Council of Canada, where he was President from 1974 to 1975.

In 1975 he left active political life to devote himself to historical research on the Algonquins. In 1980, on behalf of the Laurentian Alliance of Metis and Non-status Indians, he collaborated on a report on territorial rights; this was filed with the Office of Native Claims.

In 1982 he published a book dedicated to the people of Kipawa and entitled *Kipawa, Portrait of a People*. First it outlines the period of contact with the Europeans, mentioning the devastation caused by diseases, the missionaries' influence, the introduction of agriculture and the mass arrival of non-aboriginals. It then describes how tree felling was extremely

Agnès Chabot of Manhwaki is making a jacket from moose hide.
Photo: *Jean Fiset*

detrimental to the environment, and why trading posts and the introduction of trapping permits resulted in difficulties for the Algonquins with regard to practising their traditional subsistence activities.

Kermot A. Moore died in November 1982. At the time of his death he was preparing another book which was taken over by friends and published in 1983. This posthumous book deals with the fundamental rights of the country's first inhabitants.

Wolf Lake

This village is located 40 kilometres from Témiscamingue. Its some 68 residents make up the smallest Algonquin village; only two families have established their permanent residence there.

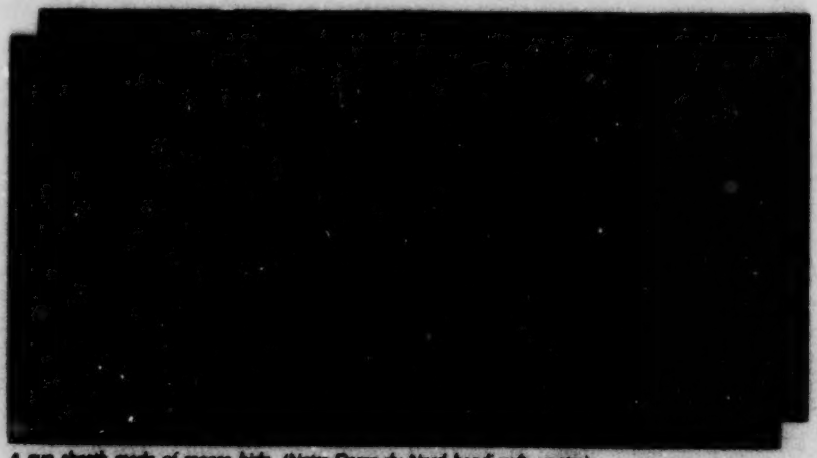
A dirt road is the only means of access to this extremely hard-to-reach territory, and no services (electricity, running water) are available. This would explain the community's exodus to the non-aboriginal village of Témiscamingue, the site of the Band Council's office and a handicrafts shop where a dozen Algonquins work.

Témiscamingue

This village was founded in 1851. It is the second largest, with a population of nearly 355, and lies 53 kilometres north of Ville-Marie. It has 68 houses, eight of which were built recently.

The Band Council employs several professionals: a social worker, an educational officer, a teacher, a nurse, four Algonquin policemen, a Band manager, secretaries, and an economic development officer.

Another source of employment is the systematic reforestation of the territory, which has become necessary as a result of the tree felling done by the forestry companies. One clearing has already been completed, and a tree nursery project, which ideal climactic conditions would favour, is under consideration.



A gun sheath made of moose hide (Notre-Dame-du-Nord handicrafts centre).
Photo: Bernard Beaupré

On the Maniwaki school playground...
Photo: Jean Fiset

The village offers a warm welcome to tourists, with its handicrafts shop and an information booth on the Algonquins living in Témiscamingue. Furthermore, during the summer it holds a local traditional day which is organized by students and open to all.

Since the fall of 1983 a local newspaper has been published once a month to keep the population up to date. It is entitled "Saugeeng News Letter"; the Algonquin word means "the lake head".

Prospects for the future are extensive. Let us mention the tree nursery project, the training of Algonquin teachers at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, the development of training programmes for both trades and professions, a construction company and a taxi station.

Grand-Lac-Victoria

This village is located 50 kilometres south of Val d'Or and has a population of 300. It is actually an ancestral meeting place which recovered its cultural significance in 1980 when the Algonquin Council was founded after an important meeting of all nine Band Chiefs was held there. This place is also renowned for being a fine wildlife reserve.

Access to the village is difficult. The road goes only as far as the lakeshore, and from there a canoe must be taken to the houses. There are 38 of these, including eight which were built recently.

Come winter, for all intents and purposes the residents leave the village to work elsewhere and devote themselves to beaver trapping. They return in May for the duration of the summer, taking advantage of the excellent fishing — sturgeon and perch primarily.

During the school period the children study at Lac-Simon. They also return to their village for the summer.

Winneway

Located 72 kilometres east of Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Winneway has a population of 235. Historically the ancestors of the Algonquins living in the village today were famous for their strength.

Winneway is not registered in accordance with the *Indian Act* and therefore does not have Indian reserve status. Its Band Council is trying to remedy the situation through negotiations or agreements with the provincial and federal governments.

There are about 40 houses in the village. A convenience store, a handicrafts shop and an amusement centre which includes a pool table all lie under one roof.

A softball tournament is organized by the population and held in September. For the last four years all the other villages have also participated.

Lac-Simon

Lac-Simon is located some 32 kilometres southeast of Val d'Or. Founded in 1962, it has a population of about 560.

Upon entering the village visitors will note on their left the location reserved for the future site of 25 houses which are to be built in the next ten years. At present 63 family homes accommodate the population. Other buildings include the church, a handicrafts centre and a cultural centre in operation since 1978 and faithfully frequented by the elders. The new school attracts attention by its modern architecture. Instruction is given up to the third year of high school, but fourth and fifth year should also be available soon. The Band Council is slated to take over the responsibility for education by 1987.

At Lac-Simon the philosophy surrounding economic development and cultural ac-

tivities is inspired by and based upon the traditional way of life.

For the last seven years the people of Lac-Simon have organized a canoe day, or Tciman Kijigan. This is a cultural and sports activity attended by some 1 200 spectators from all the Algonquin villages. Traditionally a princess is chosen. The great moments of the races and the family meetings take place along the shores of Lac-Simon, which is called Cicip Sakikan by the elders.

In the past a meeting was held before the trapping season opened, as the families subsequently dispersed over the territory. The canoe day takes place on the first weekend of September. The festivities once again give people the opportunity to revive their tales about trapping and the Algonquin families.

In the matter of schooling, the Band Council and school have included an activity week in the woods in their programme. It takes place in November, allowing the children to be with their families and learn how to set up camp, lay down traps, travel in the forest and experience all aspects of this period of the year. Videos are often shown on location, and when the children return to school traditional concepts continue to be taught with viewing sessions to which an academic dimension has been added.

The trappers' days take place in the village in late February and early March. This activity has been held for three years now; competitors must trap live hares, using only their hands or a net, and fish for pike under ice.

When spring arrives, it is time for the children's traditional sugaring-off party. They spend a day in the woods about 40 kilometres from the village to become familiar with traditional processing techniques. The annual move to camps follows in summertime. In the first week in June all families leave the village for the woods where traditional activities come to life again.

Algonquin hunting camp in Abitibi.
Photo: Pesto

Community radio is the transmission tool used for entertainment and keeping the population up to date with news. Its broadcasting capacity is eight kilometres. At present the radio station is set up in a trailer, but a production centre is scheduled to be built in 1984. Programm...g aligns the modern concepts of non-aboriginal society with the Algonquin tradition, turning from jazz ballet to traditional dance, from music in general to traditional music and from theater to legends. Young volunteers participate in this community business. For the last two years the village has been circulating its own newspaper, the "Tebwe", meaning "the true one".

In the village men and women find jobs at the school, with the Band Council, in construction and maintenance work, and at the store. Not far from Senneterre, the sawmill also offers job possibilities. A convenience store opened last December, and the building of a restaurant is under consideration.

Some emphasis should be put on the forming of the Algonquin Women's Committee of Lac-Simon in 1984; it is made up of ten women at present. Each Algonquin village has a representative within the Québec Native Women Association, but this was the first committee formed at the local level. The women want to help one another and exchange ideas. They also intend to make women aware of political life so a woman can be elected to the Band Council. They have set April 17th aside for Algonquin women on an annual basis.

Pikogan

This village was created in 1956. It is located three kilometres from the town of Amos and has a population of approximately 350.

At present there are about 60 houses at Pikogan. A new street will soon appear, meaning five new houses can be built.

The major activity is a sports event: the hockey tournament. It lasts four days and

William Commando of Manhwaki is one of the few Algonquin craftsmen to make bark canoes. His reputation extends abroad from where he receives many orders.
Photo: *Jean Fiset*

"La Banique", bread of the native peoples. It may be baked in various ways, in the sand or in a pan.
Photo: Prate

72 teams compete for the championship in various categories. Several nations participate: the Attikameks, Crees and Algonquins.

In matter of schooling, Pikogan has its Band school where elementary-level pupils are taught up to grade 4. Complete elementary school teaching will progressively be reached, one year at a time. Until then students must travel to Amos to continue their studies.

Every season the school closes for a week to enable children to live in the woods with their families and practise traditional subsistence activities — hunting, fishing and trapping. All these events are videotaped and viewed at the school to continue the teaching of traditional concepts. The village also has a teacher-training programme.

Various job possibilities are available to the Algonquins in Pikogan: reforestation of the ancestral reserve located in Ontario; excavation of grounds on the Québec reserve; construction of a trapper's museum; involvement of the elders to revive traditional handicrafts; organization of a summer pow wow. Approximately 32 persons work in the village on a full-time basis, primarily for the Band Council office.

Community radio has been broadcasting since 1984. Its operation is ensured through volunteer work.

Political and administrative organization

The Algonquin Council of Western Québec

Founded in 1980 at a major meeting attended by some 350 Algonquins, the Council is officially made up of five Band Chiefs, two representatives of the Council of Elders and one representative of the Council of Trappers. Women also take part, as does a youth representative. The villages forming the Algonquin Council are Témiscamingue, Grand-Lac-Victoria, Winneway, Lac-Simon and Pikogan. However, all nine villages obtain the same services from the Algonquin Council whose first mandate is to preserve the Algonquin culture and way of life. Elections are held every two years.

The Band Council

Each Algonquin village has its own political organization: the Band Council, whose Chief is elected by the people for a two-year term in accordance with the *Indian Act* or a longer period under the traditional system. The Chief is supported by councilors, generally four in number.

The Band Council controls administrative matters which are decided upon by a Band Manager and his team. The division of work is done almost naturally according to the capacities and interests of each council member.

The Algonquin " Anishnabe " Association

As a result of meetings among the Algonquins of Maniwaki, Wolf Lake, Lac-Rapide and Kipawa and lasting from 1982 to 1984, the Chiefs of these villages set up the Algonquin " Anishnabe " Association.

This Association has its own charter and prepares the land and political claims of the Algonquins it represents. The four founding Chiefs act as representatives of the Association in meetings with the various levels of government. Two of them were elected President and Vice-President respectively.

Law and order and health

The Amerindian police maintains law and order in the various Algonquin villages.

Generally each village has a community clinic where primary medical care is available for patients. A nurse also visits the clinic once or twice a week.

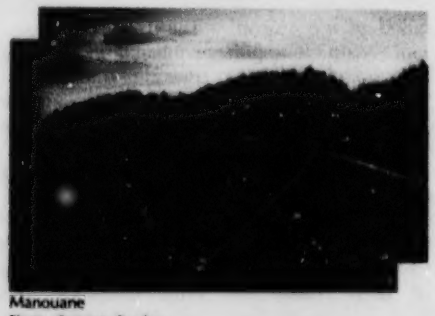
The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre

The Val d'Or Native Friendship Centre is run mainly by Algonquins. A non-profit organization, it was founded in 1974 to help the native people passing through Val d'Or adapt to the urban environment. It offers reception, recreation activities, lodging and translation services. The Friendship Centre gives special attention to young people. Its programme includes several activities: preparing information campaigns, organizing recreation activities for all ages and setting up an Amerindian rehabilitation centre. Algonquins and Crees make up the regular clientele of the Centre which also willingly welcomes non-aboriginals.

Chapter 3

The Attikameks

Moose call.
Photo: IECAH — Serge Jasvin



Manouane
Photo: *François Truchon*

The Attikameks make up the Amerindian nation which occupies the Haute-Mauricie region. Like their Cree and Montagnais neighbours, they are hunters and northern forest dwellers. Despite the relative distance of the area they lived in from urban centres, from very early on they came in contact with missionaries and merchants from trading posts established along the Saint-Maurice River. As forestry concessions were introduced and dams were built, their seasonal migrations for hunting, trapping and fishing were altered considerably. Today some 2 800 Attikameks are distributed among the villages of Obedjiwan, Manouane and Weymontachingue.

History of the Attikameks

Their Ancestors: Attikamegs and Têtes de Boule

The presence of Amerindians in Haute-Mauricie was first recorded in print at the beginning of the 17th century; they were then called the Attikamegs. *Les Relations des Jésuites* estimate that the group numbered between 500 and 800; they were considered to be a peace-loving people. Their neighbours were the Crees to the north, the Algonquins to the south, and the Montagnais to the east.

The Attikamegs lived at the heart of an imposing network of waterways. They could reach neighbouring territories via Lac Saint-Jean and Lac Mistassini, James Bay and the Gatineau River, which enabled them to develop important economic relations with the Hurons, Crees, Montagnais and Algonquins, based on the exchange of goods.

It seems that the Amerindian peoples living north of the 47th parallel and east of the Saint-Maurice River bore quite a resemblance to one another. Those who recorded the times have reported that the Attikamegs spoke a language similar to that of their Montagnais neighbours. It can also be supposed that the Haute-Mauricie Attikamegs constituted a demographic entity divided into three distinct bands with specific territorial units. Each of these bands made up a socio-economic group with which the families in the community became identified.

The Attikamegs essentially practised a subsistence economy based on hunting and fishing. They hunted beaver, otter, lynx, caribou and moose; they fished for perch, lake and brook trout, whitefish and pike.

The Attikamegs went fishing during the summer. Come winter, they dispersed into small units over a vast territory for hunting purposes. They kept up close trade relations with the Crees, Montagnais and Algonquins. Their trading activi-

ties sometimes extended to the Hurons who went into the Haute-Mauricie region to exchange corn, tobacco and other produce for furs. The French also traded with the Attikamegs at the Trois-Rivières post which became a favoured trading and meeting place around 1640.

It has been assumed that the Attikamegs were wiped out between 1670 and 1680 by epidemics and their continual fighting with the Iroquois. Their territory was occupied from 1690-1700 on by another group called « Têtes de Boule ». The hypothesis is that these people, who were probably thus named by the missionaries and residents of Trois-Rivières, may have been Attikamegs who survived this extinction process and were joined by other nomadic Amerindians. The present residents of Weymontachingue, Manouane and Obedjiwan are the descendants of these « Têtes de Boule ». It was only about ten years ago that the former name of Attikamek was once again taken up by the Haute-Mauricie people.

The Têtes de Boule were constantly in contact with white people from 1680 on. In addition to the Trois-Rivières post, new trading posts were set up one after another during the 1770s by the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies in the Haute-Mauricie region: in Les Piles, La Tuque, Rivière aux Rats, Le Vermillon, Parent and Weymontachingue. In addition to the establishment of trading posts in the Haut Saint-Maurice, the growing trade relations between aboriginal and white people, the longer and more frequent periods spent by the coureurs de bois on the territory, the significant influence of the missionaries on this Amerindian population must also be emphasized.

Around 1837 missionaries began to increasingly visit the Attikamek territory. Little by little the Weymontachingue mission became a meeting, marriage and baptism place for the various bands. A chapel was first erected in 1838 at Kikendatch, and then at Weymontachingue. By 1915 each village had its own mission.

Weymontachingue
Photo: *François Truchon*

The impact of the fur trade and industrialization

The fur trading episode was of the utmost importance in the changes and disruptions it caused in the Attikamek way of life. In the winter of 1820-21, the Hudson's Bay Company opened a trading post at Weymontachingue. The furs in demand were from seven main animal species: beaver, bear, weasel, marten, mink, otter and muskrat. At that time the trading post became a favourite meeting place of the Attikamek population. While originally a location where people came to exchange furs for ammunition, flour or possibly articles required for day-to-day living, the trading post also served as an emergency supply centre for needy Amerindians. The trading posts intensified the settling process of the Amerindians who spent more and more time there as their dependency on goods offered by the employees in exchange for furs increased.

Around the middle of the 19th century, forestry companies began to be set up in the Haute-Mauricie region. At first lumber camps were located mainly along the Bas Saint-Maurice. However, the situation changed in 1852 when forestry concessions were established along the Croche, Trenche, Vermillon, Rats and Mattawin rivers. Transport routes developed simultaneously with this introduction of forestry concessions. The old road going from Trois-Rivières to Les Grès was extended to Les Piles in 1856.

Toward 1890 the Haute-Mauricie region filled up with white people drawn by the job opportunites offered in sawmills and paper mills. This resulted in the economic development of the Haute-Mauricie. Around 1865-1870 the Hudson's Bay Company opened a winter road leading to Weymontachingue. Then a railway was built, reaching La Tuque in 1908 and Waymontachingue in 1910.

This economic development was accompanied by the harnessing of a number of rivers. Dams were developed on the Manouane River. In 1915 the Fraser Bruce Company built a dam at La Loutre which flooded the Kikendatch post. The Amerindians moved and finally settled at Obedjiwan in 1920. The creation of the Gouin Reservoir resulted in the flooding of an area of 200 square kilometres, destroyed the plant life, was extremely detrimental to the animal life and disrupted the Attikameks' traditional way of life. After the dam was built in La Loutre, the Fraser Bruce Company set up a supply post in Weymontachingue, near the railway. Subsequently the Brown Corporation located its sawmills there; in this way the village of Sanmaur was born.

This rapid industrialization of the Haute-Mauricie could not help but result in a number of changes for the Attikamek population. First came the settling process caused by passing from a subsistence economy based on hunting, fishing and trapping to an economy based on earning wages. Then the Attikameks who brought their furs to the trading posts had to take on the additional job of transporting these furs as far as La Tuque. During the 1920s they worked as guides and timber drivers or lumberjacks. Subsequently, as forestry concessions were set up and numerous rivers harnessed, they were employed in various aspects of construction work at Dam C, Parent, Windigo, Lac Régal... With the enlistment of white men during World War II, the Attikameks became an ideal alternative for the forestry companies. They knew the forest well and were not afraid of difficult living conditions. Today, lumberjack, guide and timber driver jobs still represent the best working opportunities for the Attikameks.

Introducing the Attikamek villages

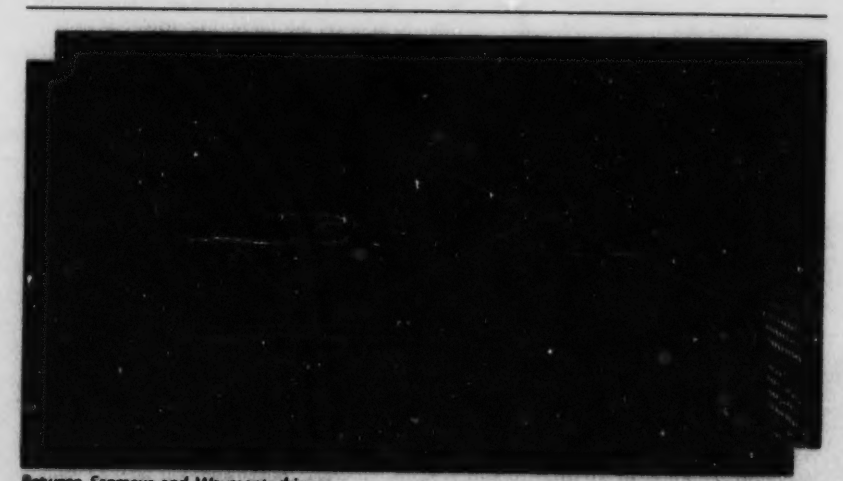
Weymontachingue

The village of Weymontachingue formed along the Saint-Maurice banks, near the mouth of the Manouane River. It is located some 160 kilometres north of La Tuque.

Access to Weymontachingue is rather difficult, as roads opened up by the large forestry compagnies for transporting wood are impractical in summer and closed during the winter. In fact, there is only one road connecting the village of Sanmaur to La Tuque, and it is in very bad shape. Between Sanmaur and Weymontachingue, the communication routes are limited to a narrow footbridge adjoining a railway bridge which straddles the Saint-Maurice River. For travelling outside Weymontachingue, residents of the village usually take the train for Québec or the Abitibi region, through La Tuque.

The Attikameks settled in Weymontachingue during the 1820s, after a trading post was opened by the Hudson's Bay Company. They built small houses around the trading post, repaired and extended the chapel. Between 1915 and 1920, the white village of Sanmaur experienced a stunning expansion. The Brown Corporation housed its lumberjacks there, as did the Fraser Bruce Company its employees for the three newly built dams. The Canadian International Paper Company (CIP) also set up in Sanmaur around 1930. In 1955 the permanent population of the white village consisted of 75 families.

For the village of Weymontachingue the 1950s brought about a precarious situation. The Hudson's Bay Company store was actually located in Sanmaur and the Amerindians had to go there several times a day. Little by little families abandoned the terrace — the name given to the former site of Weymontachingue, referring to its geographical position — to live elsewhere: Petit Montréal, Poisson



Between Sanmaur and Weymontachingue...
Photo: *François Truchon*

Blanc, Windigo... It then became difficult to offer educational and medical services to a scattered population.

For years there was a question of relocating the village of Weymontachingue. The Attikameks wanted to once again settle on the site of their former village, but the chance that this territory could be flooded with the building of a dam thwarted their plans. Several other possibilities were considered until a site was chosen, about a kilometre north of the former village. In 1972 the 600 Weymontachingue Attikameks moved into their new village which covers an area of 3 035 hectares. The population in 1984 is 654.

Today Sanmaur, a locality next to Weymontachingue, is a ghost town. The forestry camps have been abandoned, and only about fifteen people still live there. However this is where the Attikameks have access to supply services, the post office and the station.

Manouane

The village of Manouane stands on the shores of Lac Métabeskéga (Lac Madon), 92 kilometres south of Weymontachingue and about 30 kilometres north of Mont Tremblant Park. The territory within the reserve, an area of 809 hectares, extends to the northern forest which skirts the far end of the village.

Unlike the other two Attikamek villages in the Haute-Mauricie, Manouane has adequate communication routes. Since 1973 there has been a road connecting Manouane to Québec's road network, and since 1978 a joint transport system has linked Saint-Michel-des-Saints to Manouane. Furthermore, a minibus operates a regular shuttle service for patients who must go to Joliette. It is agreed that the present group in Manouane is made up of descendants of Weymontachingue's founding group.

The present-day aspect of Manouane dates back to the 1950s, when houses were built in large numbers to accommodate the rapidly increasing population, which has reached 1 032 today.

Obedjiwan

The village of Obedjiwan is located 80 kilometres northeast of Parent, in Abitibi-East County. It extends to the headland of a peninsula surrounded by the Gouin Reservoir waters. The territory covers the northern portion of the peninsula, an area of 931 hectares. Obedjiwan, which lies 140 kilometres north of Weymontachingue, is the most isolated Attikamek village, with a population of 1 200.

When the site of Kikendatch was flooded as the Gouin dam was being built, the residents moved to and settled in Obedjiwan in 1920. Shortly afterwards delegates from the Commission des eaux courantes went there to meet with the Amerindians and promised to compensate them for their losses. However, it was not until 1922 that they were given materials — and poor quality at that — to put up new homes. During the 1950s the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs built roomier houses. Little by little the village was provided with health and education services. In 1944 it obtained official reserve status.

The village of Obedjiwan is very isolated. The means of communication (telephone, mail...) do not as yet allow for continuous contacts with the outside. For the past few years it has been possible to pick up radio and television programmes by satellite, and a community radio service has been operating since December 1981.

In the past Obedjiwan residents had to make all their purchases at Oskélanéo, a small railway station lying 160 kilometres to the south of the Attikamek village. At that time they had to travel by canoe. Today the Hudson's Bay Company store

is located on the village's territory. However, the Attikameks still have to go to Roberval for major purchases.

Obedjiwan is connected to Roberval (298 kilometres) and Chibougamou (338 kilometres) by Highway 167 which merges with the CIP highway half-way. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs took over the responsibility for snow removal a few years ago. There is no joint transport system between Obedjiwan and the towns of Roberval and Chibougamou. The only means of transportation available to the Attikameks are taxi (return trip Obedjiwan-Roberval: $150) and hydroplane (return trip: $300).

Traditional way of life

The social organization of the Attikameks during the first half of the 19th century depended on the nature of their activities which varied with the changing seasons — hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering.

Early in September families left the trading posts to set up their winter camps, after stocking up on a number of staple goods. After the tents had been put up, the supplies stored away, and the wood cut for heating, the hunt began. The species were varied: moose, bear, hare, fish and birds... Each family or multi-family group occupied hunting grounds which it made full use of, while respecting the ecological balance by carefully choosing and limiting the number of animals caught.

An intensive trapping period started in November and lasted until March. In November and December men were frequently known to leave the winter camp for about two weeks to lay their traps. In January the extreme cold seldom let up and considerably restricted travelling. In February and March another concentrated trapping period began; the Attikameks then looked for beaver, otter and muskrat. April and May were two lucrative months during which they could

Nearly 300 children attend the schools of Manouane which offer courses from nursery school through to the first year of high school.
Photo: François Truchon

still trap beaver, otter and muskrat, or hunt bear as well as migratory birds on their way north. Fishing also became possible. The long period spent in the winter camps came to an end in June. They then returned to the trading posts to exchange the pelts and renew contacts with other members of the community. These places were named Kikendatch, Matapeckaka... At the beginning of July all these groups gathered on the Weymontachingue terrace, where the mission was established. This was a time for baptisms, weddings and other festivities.

During the summer the Attikameks gathered medicinal plants and various types of small fruit. They also engaged in line or net fishing. Perch, pike, brook trout, lake trout and whitefish were among the preferred species.

The Attikameks worked a good deal with wood, especially birch and white spruce. They knew how to adapt these materials to a great variety of purposes, from means of transportation to utilitarian objects. Similarly, they learned to make tools for working wood and bark, such as the well-known curved knife.

Because of the particular lie of the land in the Haute-Mauricie region, birchbark canoes proved to be a practical, light and rapid means of transportation for the Attikameks. They were used exclusively until canvas, metal and fibreglass canoes were introduced by the Hudson's Bay Company about 1910. Building was entrusted to experienced craftsmen.

These canoes were made on a cedar framework, covered with high quality birchbark. Other materials were also needed: white spruce roots were used to sew up the panels of bark and spruce gum was applied to the seams to make them waterproof.

Building a canoe required 15 to 16 days. It was an unsurpassed means of transportation as it was used about seven months of the year and had a life of close to ten years. It was replaced by the fibreglass canoe which was sometimes equipped with a small outboard motor.

Snowshoes were also an important means of transportation and could be made very quickly. First a piece of birch was trimmed with an ax and a curved knife to make a rounded, elongated frame, which was then covered with a webbing of caribou or moose thongs.

The Attikameks are also known for their bark containers. A distinction is made between the *wigwamuti* and the *orâgann*. The first has a characteristic shape, with an upper opening narrower than the bottom. Usually decorated, it has a number of uses — storing tools, clothing...

The orâgann is a container of much cruder construction, seldom decorated and consisting of only one piece of bark. It is used to collect birch and maple sap or gum from certain evergreens. It is also used for defrosting meat or storing fat.

Although Attikamek dress changed considerably through contact with white people, the custom of making mittens and moccasins has nonetheless been perpetuated to the present day. Before trading posts were set up, the Attikameks made clothes and blankets by sewing rabbit skins together. Clothing was also made out of moose skins. Two types of moccasins were used on a regular basis: soft shoes for summer and boots for winter snowshoeing.

Other objects representative of the Attikamek culture include the toboggan, toys, household gadgets and storage utensils, as well as the *tikinakan*. The latter consisted of a sub-rectangular cedar board and a cloth band with eyelets; it was used by the mother to carry her child.

Traditionally these articles are made using only an ax and a curved knife. This latter tool consists of a curved blade set in a piece of birch which is covered with leather thongs. The ax and the curved knife are metal tools especially well adapted to woodworking. They are used to fell trees, cut or carve bark, make canoes, snowshoes and household items...

Mythology

Attikamek mythology is based on a number of tales. It does not make a clear distinction between animal and human worlds. In fact, the two groups are undifferentiated, since human beings turn into animals. This lack of distinction probably meant that hunter and hunted were ecologically interdependent. As an example, here is the story of Carcajou the Wolverine.

Carcajou the Wolverine

Carcajou the Wolverine was once a man who lived with his wife and children. One day he went hunting and met three big, well-built and handsome men. They were wolves. They went up to Carcajou and asked if he wished to accompany them. Carcajou did not dare contradict them and said he would follow. They therefore left and Carcajou, worried, thought about his wife and children whom he was leaving at home. On the third day of the expedition, they climbed to the top of a mountain and in the distance Carcajou saw the hut where his wife and children lived. He suddenly started crying and confessed to the wolves that he had said he was a bachelor so they would not eat his wife. They were deeply offended by his lack of confidence. As punishment he was allowed to build no more than three fires for his meals on his trip home to his family. He could only make one fire a day, observing very precise instructions. In addition, he could not turn around to look at the place he was coming from.

Carcajou therefore left the wolves and observed the prescribed rules on his trip home. However, he never stopped thinking about the wolves and vowed inward-

The Weymontachingue dispensary, like those in other Attikamek communities, ensures appropriate medical care.
Photo: François Truchon

ly: "You will pay for this!". He thus went to bed, seething with rage, to wake up suddenly during the night. He realized he had four legs, no feet or arms, and his nose was sharp and pointed like a wolf's.

Thinking he was dreaming, he fell asleep again and felt he was losing his memory. The next day he woke up, and the only thing on his mind was the feeling that someone had wanted to hurt him. Subsequently he took revenge whenever the opportunity arose. These are the reasons why Carcajou the Wolverine is always seeking harm and destruction, wreaking havoc wherever he goes.

Achievements

Political organization

In the past the Attikamek system of chiefs did not exist in the form known today. The man who became chief was the one who proved best qualified to ensure his group's survival. As the Amerindians usually lied scattered throughout the forest, this role often fell upon the male head of a family if the need was felt. This leadership was based on wisdom and experience, rather than authority. The chieftainship was also handed down from father to son, with the agreement of the other members of the group.

Over the years, the Amerindians found themselves increasingly involved in sustained relations with the different levels of government. The chief now assumes the role of community representative and administrator. Each village elects a Band Council, made up of a chief and a variable number of councilors, which attends to its interests.

The Attikamek nation joined the Montagnais to form the Conseil attikamek-montagnais (CAM), a corporation legally registered in 1975. The CAM represents the interests of these two nations related by geography, language and culture, which have decided to pursue their socio-economic and cultural development together. The CAM is also the organization through which the political and land claims of these two peoples are voiced. Since 1980 the CAM has actually been engaged in three-party negotiations with the Canadian and Québec governments to have territorial rights and the right to political autonomy recognized.

Educational services

Schooling was introduced in Weymontachingue around 1925. Taking advantage of the Amerindian gathering on the terrace where the mission was established, the missionaries imparted some general knowledge, although their primary concerns were preaching and spreading the gospel.

In 1954 the young Attikameks were sent to the Collège d'Amos. The removal from their homes and difficulty in adapting to the socio-cultural characteristics of white (Québec) society made it difficult for them to carry on their studies. Therefore, in 1972-1973 a school was built in the village itself. Today classes are given to nursery school, kindergarten, elementary school and junior high school children. Some 155 children attend the school which has eleven teachers, six Amerindians and five whites. The principal is an Attikamek.

For the Manouane population, schooling is also relatively recent. The first school was built in 1928, but it only remained open during the summer since children accompanied their parents to the hunting grounds. During the 1950s a more regular education programme was given to elementary pupils. A second school was erected in 1975-1976. The Manouane schools now offer classes from nursery through kindergarten and elementary school to the first year of high school. Close to 300 children attend these schools which are under Attikamek ad-

ministration. Classes are also offered to adults wishing to acquire professional training or to pursue a programme of general education.

There are three schools in Obedjiwan, the most recent of which was built in 1969-1970. Classes are given from nursery school to the end of elementary school. The Obedjiwan schools have an attendance of about 300 children and some adults. The administration and supervision of these three schools are also assumed by an Attikamek.

A significant achievement of the Obedjiwan, Weymontachingue and Manouane communities was the creation of the Attikamekw/Sipi Coordination Committee which is responsible for developing programmes in education, social services and economics. The committee office in La Tuque employs three persons who work in collaboration with Attikamek instructors on improving school programmes. The objectives are to create a standardized school programme for the three communities and meet the specific requirements of teaching in the Amerindian milieu. The committee is also in charge of organizing an information day and planning classes and workshops for Attikamek techolinguists, writers and illustrators.

The Attikamekw/Sipi Coordination Committee is also working on developing an Attikamek education programme and setting up pedagogical services. At present the emphasis is on training teachers for kindergarten to grade two. Similarly, the committee members are preparing — in the Attikamek language — a course in natural science dealing with the six Attikamek seasons.

Finally, the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi offers a teacher-training programme under Attikamekw/Sipi supervision. Training sessions calling upon writers, artists and specialists in technolinguistics are offered to Attikameks who wish to become teachers.

It should be noted that the Regional Education Committee grouping the three At-

Using only his axe, a curved knife and an awl, César Newashish makes superb birchbark canoes.
Photo: François Truchon

tikamek communities together allowed for the creation of a language institute. This task force is responsible for establishing the rules of writing the Attikamek language. It also has to determine the Attikamek spelling conventions in order to offer an effective teaching model. Finally, the institute seeks to clarify the meanings of Attikamek words, while respecting the language or dialect of each community.

Health services

The Attikamek communities are equipped with health services ensuring all members of these far-off villages rapid and adequate medical care. In each community, two nurses from Health and Welfare Canada give primary care in the local clinic. In Obedjiwan they also offer prenatal consultation services. Doctors make the rounds of the three villages at regular intervals. The Attikameks can also rely on the visits of a pediatrician, a dentist, an optometrist and a radiologist. For specialized care they have to go to the hospital in either Roberval or Joliette.

In addition to these services which are offered equally to all Attikamek communities, there are treatments which are exclusive to certain villages. For instance, in Obedjiwan and Weymontachingue there is a community health officer who attends to making the population aware of health and hygiene problems within their milieu, in collaboration with the clinic's nursing staff. In Manouane there has been a Mother and Child Centre since 1972, created by Health and Welfare Canada with the task of preventing infantile diseases. It also ensures the medical follow-up of children up to the age of five, and pregnant women are taught certain basic concepts of preventive medicine.

Community radio stations

The introduction of community radio stations in the Attikamek communities of Weymontachingue, Manouane and Obedjiwan is a remarkable achievement. It gives a concrete form to the sociocultural interdependence of villages

Camping ground several kilometres from Manouane.
Photo: *François Truchon*

which are nevertheless far away from one another.

Community radio is the result of a joint Attikamek-Montagnais project. In the summer of 1979 the commnuity radio project for the Moyenne and Basse Côte-Nord regions was suggested to the Conseil Attikamek-Montagnais. The first equipment was installed in the Montagnais communities of La Romaine and Natashquan. The Manouane and Weymontachingue Attikameks did not take long to become interested in having their own community radio stations. They called upon the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which allowed them to use a transmitter located nearby. A fact worthy of note: Attikamek radio broadcasts by satellite, using the CBC transmitter, while Montagnais community radio stations operate by shortwave.

At present there are eleven Attikamek and Montagnais stations and one Attikamek-Montagnais radio production centre which is located in Village-des-Hurons. The main objectives of this production centre are to establish exchanges among the various Amerindian communities and prepare programmes at the regional level in social, cultural and political spheres of concern to the Attikameks and Montagnais. The Attikamek-Montagnais radio production centre is capable of preparing several hours of programming a week; the programmes are then broadcast by each community.

The introduction of HF (High Frequency) radios has also made it possible to maintain communication with Attikamek hunters on a regular basis. When they leave their villages during the hunting season, they can receive information on various subjects, such as fluctuations in the fur market. In turn, they can advise the village of an accident or a sudden illness.

A final Attikamek-Montagnais community project came into being in July 1982. This was the creation of Contact-Réseau, a communications system ensuring a direct link among the communities. With the help of CBC Northern Services, the Attikamek-Montagnais production centre

The Weymontachingue cemetery stretches over the site of the former village.
Photo: François Trudeau

broadcasts programmes for eleven villages between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m., via shortwave and by satellite simultaneously.

The Attikamek and Montagnais communities have other joint projects: developing community television, creating regional production centres which take the specific characteristics of each community into account, exchanging talkshow hosts and forming a communications corporation grouping serveral Amerindian nations in Québec and the Labrador Amerindians.

Attikamek art

From time immemorial the Attikamek have been making birchbark articles. They also use several varieties of wood to create toboggans, canoes and snowshoes. Caribou bones and skins become tools, clothes and leather thongs are used for the webbing on snowshoes. In short, the Attikameks put all the resources of their ecological environment to good use.

Meeting mainly utilitarian requirements, items of the traditional culture fill very specific roles: means of transportation, containers and receptacles, clothing and toys. Moreover, they are richly decorated and often take on original shapes. However, most of these manifestations of the Attikamek culture are not very permanent as birchbark and wood damage easily. Serveral institutions, including the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), the National Museum of Man (Ottawa) and the Musée du Québec, have fortunately acquired canoes, baskets, tools and other artefacts reflecting the strength of the Attikamek culture.

Among the best known Attikamek artists is César Newashish, whose specialty is building birchbark canoes. His art was immortalized in a documentary produced by the National Film Board (NFB) in which César Newashish makes a superb birchbark canoe, using only his ax, his curved knife and his awl. He is a creator who harmoniously embodies the finest characteristics of Attikamek art.

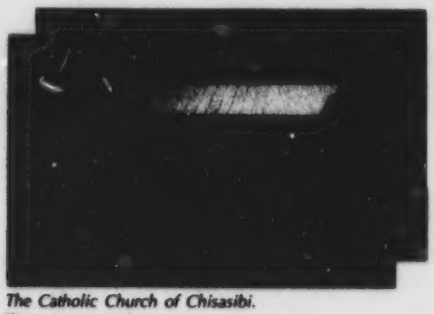
A young Attikamek boy.
Photo: *IECAM — Serge Jauvin*

Whether it be the programme of making the school milieu Amerindian, teaching the Attikamek language, or the extraordinary development of means of communication for the community, the Attikameks of Weymontachingue, Obedjiwan and Manouane have provided themselves with effective and innovative programmes of action. They have strengthened solidarity which has united the Attikamek people down through the ages, the bases of a political group enabling them to claim the right to administer their ancestral territories, preserve their traditional way of life and institute social services adapted to the needs of the Amerindian population. All in all, in their day-to-day life, these first inhabitants of the Haute-Mauricie region show a deep-rooted loyalty and an attachment to their ancestor's place of birth.

Chapter 4

The Crees

John Manacum, Maggie at William Rabbitskin from Mistassini on the Conigiscau River.
Photo: Gilles H. Picard



The Catholic Church of Chisasibi.
Photo: Jacques Nadeau

The Crees of Québec belong to the vast Algonquian linguistic family. The entire population speaks the Cree language. Today some 7 500 people live in the eight Cree villages of the James Bay region — Whapmagoostui (Poste-de-la-Baleine), Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain and Waskaganish (Fort Rupert) on the eastern shores of James Bay and Hudson Bay; and Nemiscau, Mistassini and Waswanipi, in the interior. About 1 000 other Crees live elsewhere, most of them in transit.

Cree life in the James Bay area has always been closely tied to hunting and fishing activities. As resources in their territory were limited, they lived in small nomadic groups and often had to travel great distances in the past. They developed a technology and social life which were adapted to the harshness of the climate and their environment. The animals most highly valued by their hunters were moose, caribou and wild geese.

A few historical notions

Man's occupation of the territory goes back nearly 4 000 years, about 5 000 years after the end of the ice age, and could even be of longer standing in the southern regions.

The first waves of European visitors in the Hudson Bay and James Bay area date back to the 17th century, with the explorations of Henry Hudson (1610) and Thomas James (1631) who managed to reach the mouth of the Rupert River and winter there. In 1668 Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médart Chouart des Groseillers in turn attempted on behalf of a group of English merchants to go to James Bay to set up the fur trade with the Amerindians in the region. Radisson's ship was damaged and had to turn back, while des Groseillers reached the Rupert River where he built Fort Charles and spent the winter. The cargo of furs he brought back to England encouraged the English merchants who had financed the first expedition to found the Hudson's Bay Company.

In 1670 the new company received a Royal Charter, granting it a monopoly over the fur trade in the entire Hudson Bay basin, an area of almost 13 million square kilometres. Thus began the era of the fur trade in the region occupied by the Crees. However, it should be emphasized that when the first white people arrived in the James Bay region, the Crees were already involved in the fur trade and owned certain European goods, as a result of contacts with the Amerindian groups dwelling near their territory. Moreover, the custom of bartering or exchanging among the various groups living in Québec actually preceded the arrival of the first Europeans. It seems that the Crees were at the far end of a trade

network which began at the Saint Lawrence and moved north as far as James Bay through several intermediate groups, including the Montagnais in the east and the Algonquins in the south.

It was not until Father Albanel's expedition that the first European officially reached James Bay, travelling overland. In 1672, guided by the Montagnais, he went as far as the Rupert River where the Hudson's Bay Company had already set up its first trading post. Father Albanel's trip was followed by several other French expeditions. The French quickly engaged in fierce competition with the Hudson's Bay Company which had not yet managed to penetrate further inland. For a long time the French coureurs de bois, settling upstream from the more important rivers in the James Bay region and near lakes Mistassini and Nemiscau, which is the heart of the Cree hunting territory, obtained the furs before they could reach the Hudson's Bay Company posts. The competition between English and French came to a head between 1686 and 1713, when James Bay was invaded by the Chevalier de Troyes and Pierre Lemoyne d'Iberville. In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, returning Hudson Bay to the English. This stormy episode does not seem to have unduly influenced the Crees who supplied the posts with pelts, no matter who the owners were.

Subsequently the French coureurs de bois continued to frequent the James Bay region, seeking out its beautiful furs, to be imitated by employees of the Northwest Company about 1803. This stiff competition forced the Hudson's Bay Company to cease waiting in its coastal posts for the Cree trappers to arrive. Instead, they penetrated further inland, east and northeast of the bay, and even opened posts, including those of Mistassini, Nemiscau, Waswanipi, Nichicun, Caniaspiscau, and later Chimo, in the Ungava. When the competition ended, several of these inland posts were closed. Posts on the coast also opened and closed, as Company needs and trading policies fluctuated; for instance, Fort Rupert, the first post on James Bay, Eastmain, the first permanent

Duplex being built in Eastmain.
Photo: Bernard Bocquet

post and for a long time the most important, "Big River" or Fort George which ended up replacing Eastmain, and Great Whale River, white whale hunting centre.

From the very beginnings of the fur trade, Hudson's Bay Company employees had to rely on Cree collaboration, as they could not survive alone in a country they did not know. Therefore a relationship of interdependance and technological exchange was established very quickly. Some European products, including metal objects, guns and string, rapidly became extremely useful for the Amerindians, while snowshoes, canoes and certain techniques peculiar to the aboriginal people proved indispensable for the Europeans living in the James Bay region.

Those who recorded the period of the fur trade in writing noted a distinction which still exists today between Crees of the coast (Coasters) and Crees from the interior (Inlanders). The main activity of the coastal Crees was goose hunting; their hunting and trapping territories were not very far away and did not require the use of a canoe. This enabled them to go to the trading posts several times a year. It was from them in particular that the Hudson's Bay Company recruited temporary workers and purchased the provisions it needed, especially geese. However, the coastal Crees did not remain at the posts. The inland Crees, more numerous than those of the coast and occupying the land at a distance from the coast, only came to the post once a year to exchange their furs; they were the main suppliers of pelts.

The Cree way of life did not undergo very many changes until the 20th century. However, certain events are worthy of note. In the 1850s the first Anglican missionaries arrived and not only carried out their evangelical mission, but also took on the responsibility for education and health services. From 1948 on, the federal government and its institutions became increasingly present in the James Bay region. In the 1950s the system of compulsory schooling was established. At the beginning of the 1970s, the James Bay hydroelectric development was announc-

A caribou hunting camp in the James Bay region: part of the interior space is below ground level.
Photo: Roland Chénier

ed, bringing about negotiations with the Crees and Inuit, followed by the signing of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement in 1975.

The Villages

Whapmagoostui (Poste-de-la-Baleine)

The village, which is occupied by both Crees and Inuit, is almost on the traditional boundary between Cree and Inuit territories. When the European traders arrived, these territories were bounded by Lac Guillaume-Delisle, Lac à l'Eau Claire and Petit Lac des Loups-Marins, the Crees living to the south and the Inuit to the north. At that time, Cree activities were mainly concentrated on caribou hunting, around Lac Guillaume-Delisle, and white whale (beluga) fishing in Little Whale River and Great Whale River.

The Hudson's Bay Company set up at Richmond Gulf (Lac Guillaume-Delisle) in 1749, its objectives being mining development, whale fishing for the oil trade, and fur trading with the Crees and Inuit. Not always as successful as expected, various posts were opened or closed or moved from Richmond Gulf to Little Whale River and Great Whale River. In 1901 Whapmagoostui became a permanent post, and in 1956 a military base was set up there. After the military base was opened, the native people began to settle permanently at Whapmagoostui, at the mouth of the Great Whale River.

Today the population of Poste-de-la-Baleine comprises Crees, Inuit and other people. However, the Inuit have decided to relocate to Lac Guillaume-Delisle. Four languages are spoken in the community — Cree, Inuktitut, French and English. The Cree portion of the village is called Whapmagoostui, which means *whale river*, whereas the Inuit section is Kuujjuarapik, meaning *beautiful big river.*

Chisasibi

In 1803, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, George Atkinson II opened a post at the mouth of La Grande Rivière

These caribou skins which have been scraped and hung to dry will be used to make moccasins and other things.
Photo: Roland Chénier

("Big River" or Chisasibi) on Île des Gouverneurs, to compete with the North-west Company which had already set up there. The latter left La Grande in 1806, and until 1837, when it reopened permanently, the Hudson's Bay Company post moved into and out of the limelight. In 1837 the La Grande post took on the name of Fort George. The Fort George activities, like those of Whapmagoostui, were tied to whale fishing, the latter being sought by tradesmen for their oil. The location of this post also meant that the Crees who frequented the northeastern part of the James Bay region could be reached more easily.

The first Anglican missionary, Reverend E.A. Watkins, came to Fort George in 1852. In 1907 missionaries of the Church Missionary Society founded the first school at Fort George. The first Catholic missionary, Father Couture, arrived in 1927, accompanied by Oblate brothers. The missionaries helped set up education and health services.

From 1903 to 1934 the Hudson's Bay Company had to grapple with a new competitor, the French company Révillon Frères, headed in Fort George by Gaston Hérodier.

During the 20th century, Crees began to live in Fort George on a semi-permanent basis and build a few houses. By 1965 there were about sixty of them. Following the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (1975) and that of Chisasibi (1978), the Fort George Cree population left Île des Gouverneurs in 1980 to settle in its new village of Chisasibi, on the shores of La Grande, about 9 km inland.

Wemindji

In 1685 a small trading post was built by the Hudson's Bay Company at the mouth of the Old Factory River (Vieux-Comptoir), but it was abandoned when James Bay was invaded by the French in 1686 under the command of Chevalier Pierre de Troyes. Subsequently there was no mention of any establishment between

The Crees still practise traditional subsistence activities such as hunting caribou in the fall.
Photo: Roland Chénier

the Eastmain and La Grande rivers, which did not keep the Old Factory River from being frequented by several Cree families. In 1930 Crees attached to the Fort George and Eastmain posts, whose trapping grounds were on the coast and the Old Factory River, gathered in greater and greater numbers on a small island located at the mouth of the Old Factory River. The Hudson's Bay Company set up a permanent post in 1935. However, the location of this village presented several problems: difficult access, lack of drinking water, excessive deforestation of the island causing great exposure to winds. In 1959 the people moved to the present site, at the mouth of the Maquata River, on the eastern shore of James Bay.

The Band has kept the name of the first site it occupied on the Old Factory River (Vieux-Comptoir). The present village is also known by the names of Paint Hills and Nouveau-Comptoir.

Eastmain

Originally the term "Eastmain" was given to the eastern shores of James Bay and Hudson Bay, as opposed to the western shores, "Westmain". This name now designates the village where the first permanent trading post on the eastern shore of James Bay was set up in 1719. Moreover, Eastmain House served the entire east coast of James Bay for several years on its own.

Towards the end of the 1690s, a Hudson's Bay Company boat sailed along the eastern shore and wintered at the mouth of the Slude River (today, the Eastmain River). The construction of a permanent post at this place was decided upon to counter the French competition and attract Cree trappers from the north and inland. The first site of the Eastmain post was on La Pêche River, a tributary of the Slude River, but in 1739 it was moved to the south shore, closer to the coast. From 1770 on Eastmain House was occupied year round, and no longer being under the responsibility of Fort Albany, on the west coast, became the main post on the east coast.

In the fall the Crees leave Chisasibi on the Grande Rivière to head for their hunting grounds on the shores of James Bay.
Photo: Roland Chénier

In 1837 it was decided that the Eastmain post was too close to the Rupert post which had opened in 1776, and hence its activities were transferred to the new post of Fort George (La Grande) to serve northern trappers better.

Eastmain, which today is the smallest village on the eastern shore of James Bay, was the most important trading post for several years.

Waskaganish (Fort Rupert)

While Eastmain was the first permanent trading post to be established east of James Bay, Fort Rupert is certainly the oldest trading post in the region, Fort Charles dating back to 1668. It was at Fort Rupert that all the early explorers spent the winter — Hudson, James, des Groseillers and Albanel.

After Fort Charles was destroyed by the French in 1693, it was abandoned by the Hudson's Bay Company until 1776, when a secondary post was built on this site. It came under the responsibility of the Eastmain post, its purpose being to supply the latter with geese and provide a link between the inland posts and those on the coast. In 1817 Fort Rupert became the major post on the coast.

The village of Waskaganish, today located on the south bank at the mouth of the Rupert River, has become a crossroads linking Moosonee (in Ontario), Matagami, the rest of the James Bay area and Mistassini. The Cree name for this village is Waskaganish, which means *small house*.

Nemiscau

By 1663 Lac Nemiscau was part of the Mistassini-Rupert River waterway leading to James Bay. At the time of the fur trade it was first frequented by the French. In 1794 the Hudson's Bay Company set up a post there; it was closed in 1970. After the departure of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Cree population, which had gathered around the post, scattered to settle in Fort Rupert, Mistassini and Pointe-Bleue. Following the signing of the

The roof of the hunting camp is covered with moss. This camp can house three to four Cree families.
Photo: Roland Chénier

James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, the Nemiscau Band Crees were able to unite in 1977 and found a new village at the present site, on the shores of Lac Champion.

Mistassini

Because of its strategic position in the network of waterways Lac Mistassini has certainly long since been a favourite meeting place for the Amerindians, among them the Crees.

European traders were quick to note the strategic importance of the Lac Mistassini region, and in 1673 some French from Québec City set up a post in order to intercept the furs before the trappers took them to the Hudson's Company posts on James Bay. This competition between French and English lasted a long time, as it was only in 1812 that the Hudson's Bay Company reached Lac Mistassini and opened a post there.

Today, Mistassini has the largest population of all the Cree villages in Québec — some 2 500.

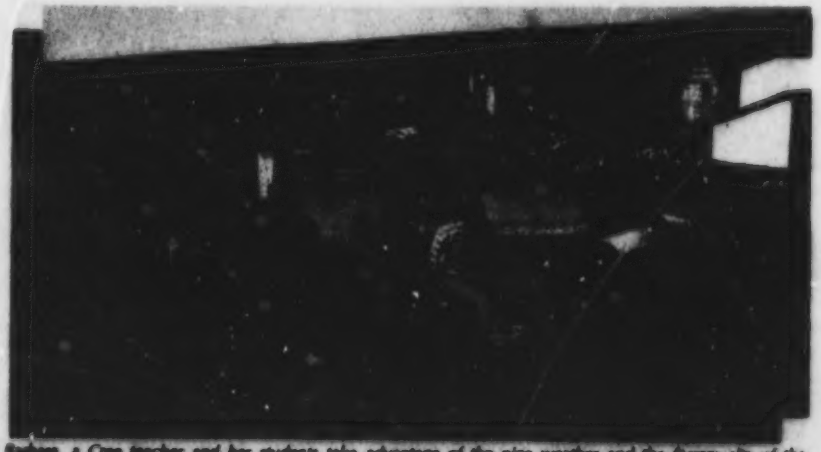
Waswanipi

Although Waswanipi was not mentioned in Hudson's Bay Company records until 1819, when a trading post was built, it should be noted that there was a trading post on Lac Cheashquacheston (Gull Lake), next to Lac Waswanipi, from 1799 to 1802. The Lac Waswanipi post had to compete with the Northwest Company, which also had a trading post there.

The first village of Waswanipi was located on an island at the northern end of the lake. When a railroad (1957) and a road (1964) were built between Chibougamou and Senneterre, the Cree population began to disperse throughout the region. In 1974 the Crees decided to relocate in a new village on the Waswanipi River.

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement

The Crees were under the administrative supervision of the federal government for a long time, but in the last ten years they



Barbara, a Cree teacher and her students take advantage of the nice weather and the former site of the Waskaganish village for an art class.
Photo: Roland Chénier

have become largely autonomous. This emancipation really took off in 1975 when the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was signed, granting each Cree Band the power of self-government, within its reserved lands, by passing the by-laws required for running its own affairs. This right was established by special legislation which the federal parliament will soon pass to follow up on the Agreement.

In addition, for the past few years the Crees have been running the organizations responsible for their education, health, social services, housing, and economic development. Most of these organizations were created by Québec legislation, also stemming from the signing of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

Regional and local administration

It was the Grand Council of the Crees that signed the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement in 1975. The Grand Council was created several years earlier to defend the rights of the Crees faced with the hydro-electric development project in the James Bay area. From 1975 to 1978 it remained the trustee of the beneficiaries of the Agreement until the Cree Regional Authority was created. The Grand Council still exists. It is composed of the chief and a delegate from each of the eight Cree Bands and is the political body representing all the Crees.

The Cree Regional Authority (CRA) is a service organization for all the communities. The CRA receives its mandates from the Band Councils. It carries out an administrative function on a regional basis in matters such as housing, economic development, environment protection, municipal services. It is also responsible for administering and managing the indemnities provided under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. It is to be noted that the president of the CRA who is elected by the population at large also becomes the Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees.

Construction of a temporary camp in which 30 persons can sleep comfortably on a thick layer of spruce branches.
Photo: Roland Chénier

The local government of each Cree community is the responsibility of the Band Council which, in addition to managing the territory allocated to each community, must make sure that the various programmes (both government and other) run smoothly.

Several independent organizations or corporations were also founded by the Crees to meet specific needs. Let us note, among others, the Cree Housing Corporation, the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, the Cree Trappers Association, the Cree Distribution Centre, the Cree Construction Company, Air Creebec, etc.

Education

Provided for in the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, the Cree School Board was created by Québec legislation in 1978. Comprising representatives from the eight Cree communities and one Cree Regional Authority representative, it is responsible for and runs the whole of the school administration, including preparing school programmes and hiring staff. Among its priorities can be emphasized the introduction of new Ministère de l'Éducation programmes in second-language instruction (the choice of English or French) and the development of programmes on the Cree culture and language. Moreover, Cree is already being taught at all levels, although in more intensive fashion in nursery school and kindergarten.

Each Cree community has a school where kindergarten to grades 8 or 9 are taught. The Chisasibi polyvalente, which offers the full programme of secondary education in addition to elementary schooling, accepts students from other Cree communities who come to complete their secondary studies.

Each village has a school committee which is consulted about school policies — programmes, languages of instruction, hiring of staff — and which may make recommendations on any matter connect-

Waswanipi.
Photo : Roland Chénier

ed with student life and school operations. In particular, it decides upon the second language to be used for teaching.

Health and social services

Since 1978 the James Bay Crees have had their own Regional Board of Health and Social Services, created by Québec legislation and run by the Crees themselves. It is in charge of the administration of health care and social services for all the communities. In addition there is a hospital in Chisasibi which serves the five villages along the coast. Therefore, for first-line services (general medicine, obstetrics, pediatrics or extended care) the Crees can go to a hospital in their own community; as for nursing care, each village has its own clinic, which is under the responsibility of the Chisasibi Hospital. The people of Mistassini, Waswanipi and Nemiscau can go to hospitals in Chibougamou, Val d'Or or Matagami. The Chisasibi Hospital is also supported by the Northern Module of the Montréal General Hospital for the training of medical staff, specialist needs, the development of health programmes and the hospitalization of Crees in Montréal.

Housing and construction

The improvement of housing conditions being a Cree priority, major residential modernization and construction programmes were set up in existing villages. Furthermore, three new villages were planned — Chisasibi, Waswanipi and Nemiscau.

The Cree Housing Corporation was founded in 1976 to develop and carry out various community building projects, including setting up certain infrastructures such as waterworks, sewers or water treatment systems. The Cree Housing Corporation works in cooperation with the Band Councils.

The Cree Construction Company was also set up in 1976, its objectives being job creation and the training of skilled and experienced Cree personnel in the construction field. It works in various spheres — deforestation, construction of houses,

A site long visited by the Crees; la rivière Corvette in the James Bay area. In the background we see a temporary fishing camp.
Photo: *Roland Chénier.*

public buildings and waterworks, highway development and maintenance, etc..

Accessibility and transportation

For a long time the Crees lived in almost complete isolation from the rest of Québec. Transportation by water, the main means of communication, was actually limited to a few weeks during the summer because of ice.

The arrival of the first bushplane in the James Bay region towards the end of the 1930s altered the situation. Today the Crees have their own air transport company, *Air Creebec*, which ensures a regular link among the coastal villages, Matagami and Val d'Or. Moreover, this air link provides the main means of transportation for most of these villages. The people of Chisasibi have access to the airport in La Grande, about 100 km east of their village, and to the air companies from Montréal or Québec City which stop over.

There is also the 700 km long LG-2 — Matagami highway. Chisasibi is the only village on the coast that can be reached by this highway throughout the year, while the other coastal villages (with the exception of Whapmagoostui are only accessible sporadically via winter roads. Nemiscau, on the edge of Lac Champion, can be directly reached by the winter road alone; the rest of the year a road connecting Highway LG-2 — Matagami to the Nemiscau sub-station of Hydro-Québec reaches the wharf on Lac Champion where motor boats provide transportation to the village. Waswanipi and Mistassini have access to Québec's highway network between Chibougamou and Senneterre.

During the summer months, the villages on the coast also use the sea to transport goods by barge from Moosonee.

Communications

Communications, which have always held an important position in aboriginal

In Waskaganish as elsewhere, children's games are based on adult activities.
Photo: Roland Chénier

life, have experienced a considerable and rapid expansion in the last few years. For centuries the major means of communication was the oral tradition which passed on the outstanding features of life, history and news. Today the emphasis is on modern communications techniques. First an attempt was made to use the written word, but more and more the audio-visual media seem to correspond to reality and meet Cree needs.

The introduction of community radio stations has already begun in several communities and should be completed a few years from now. One community, that of Mistassini, has already started to produce programmes on tape. The control of radio and television programming has a great importance in the preservation and handing down of the Cree culture, language and values. Moreover, the Crees show an ever-increasing interest in learning audio-visual techniques.

Communications have also reached the hunters and trappers who are linked to their villages by transmitting sets from their hunting grounds where they sometimes stay for quite long periods.

Ensuring the continuity — Traditional activities

Hunting, fishing and trapping

Down through the centuries hunting and fishing have been the primary means of survival for the Crees. These activities have been perpetuated until today and have profoundly affected their culture and way of life. Although the trapping of fur-bearing animals became slightly more important at the time of the fur trade, it always remained of lesser significance than the subsistence activities. During the 20th century the Crees have increasingly settled in the present-day villages, without however ceasing their traditional hunting and fishing activities which a significant portion of the population continues to practise; the hunting of Canada geese in spring and fall, time spent on hunting grounds during the winter, or in fishing camps in summertime. This continuity of traditional activities explains

Cree children having fun on what might be the biggest skating rink in the world: in winter August and James Bay.
Photo: Roland Chénier

why the Crees were anxious that their hunting, fishing and trapping rights be protected in the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. A system was therefore established, giving the Crees exclusive hunting and fishing rights on category I and II lands, and exclusive trapping rights on category III lands.

In 1976, as provided for by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, an Income Security Programme for Cree Hunters and Trappers was instituted to encourage the practice of traditional activities. This programme, which is aimed at Crees who spend most of their time hunting and fishing, allows for the financing of these activities while ensuring the beneficiaries a steady income. The Agreement limits the total number of beneficiaries to 150 000 person/days per annum, but the Québec legislation which officially created the programme in 1978 increased this number to 286 000. The high rate of participation which the Crees have sustained since the programme was set up indicates their determination to see traditional hunting and fishing activities carried on and to perpetuate the corresponding life style.

In 1978 the Cree Trappers Association was also formed, representing all Cree communities. Its objectives are to develop trapping grounds, market furs and improve services for trappers.

Handicraft techniques and traditional art forms

Cree handicrafts have always been very closely related to the way of life based on hunting and fishing. They therefore reflect the Cree material culture (working of pelts, utilitarian objects, decorations), and traditional techniques developed over the years have been carried on until present times with few changes. Although the production of handicrafts has come onto the market today instead of being restricted to the exclusive use of the craftsman and his family, it still remains an integral part of the traditional life cycle. Thus the time devoted to handicraft activities depends largely on hunting and fishing peri-

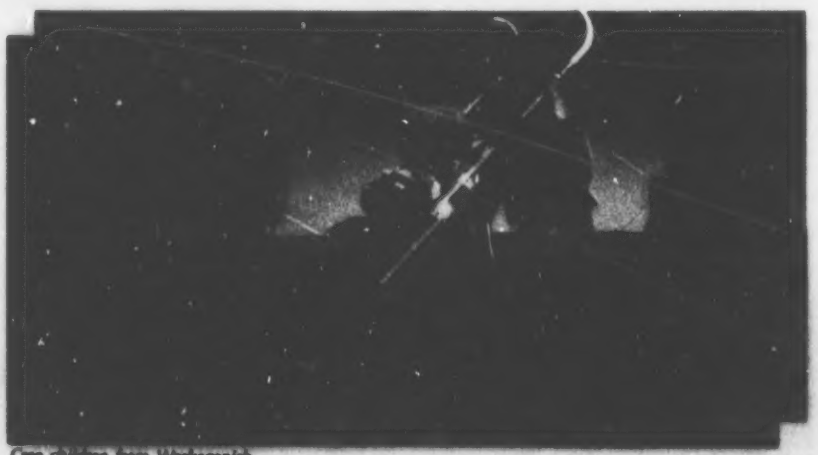
Decoys on the ice of James Bay. They are used by the Cree to attract Canada geese.
Photo: *Roland Chénier*

ods; arts and crafts are not actually the major occupation of most craftsmen.

There now exists a Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association with about 300 members. Its role is to market the goods produced, provide backing, training and information for the craftsmen, and organize exhibitions. While half the production is sold locally in the villages, the rest is sold outside through the Cree boutique in Val d'Or, where the Association runs a prosperous business.

The Cree tradition has also inspired artists who have developed products and techniques characteristic of themselves. This is the case of John Blueboy, from Waskaganish, who has perfected the technique of producing tamarack decoys, which were originally made in a rudimentary fashion from willow twigs. From the utilitarian objects they were originally, the geese by John Blueboy have become works of art, a reflection of the Cree heritage. Glenna Matush, an artist from Mistassini, uses the non-traditional technique of engraving to depict scenes from the everyday life of the Crees, the people, and their environment.

The Crees, who from time immemorial have been travelling over the immense James Bay territory in small groups, always presented a certain element of cultural unity, although their nomadic way of life and the distances covered did not often allow them to get together in great numbers. Moreover, the solidarity existing within the Cree nation has come to the fore several times throughout their history. Today the Crees are taking their destiny into their own hands gradually by asserting their priorities — the socio-economic development of their people, a certain degree of political and administrative autonomy, better education — while preserving their language, culture and traditions.



Cree children from Waskaganish.
Photo: *Roland Chénier*

Chisasibi
Photo: *Jacques Nadeau*

Chapter 5

The Hurons

Marianne Picard takes great care in choosing the coloured beads which go into her superb embroidery work.
Photo: Claire Dufour

Workshop where canoes are manufactured by craftsmen.
Photo: Claire Dufour

The Hurons in the past

Talking about the history of the Huron nation is an immense task as it requires recounting both the events of what is known as the pre-Columbian period and the significant changes brought about by the French colonization of this continent. To this must be added the dynamism of the present-day Huron culture which is expressed by both its artists and its political representatives.

However, one leading theme has dominated down through the centuries of history, its source being the pride and feeling of belonging to the Huron community. From the first settlements in Huronia near Georgian Bay to Village-des-Hurons near Québec, it has been possible to observe this model history which attests the greatness of a people and a nation.

Linguistic, historical and geographical aspects

The Hurons call themselves « Wendat », a word meaning « islanders » or « peninsula dwellers » in their language. In fact, the Huronia settlement was mainly concentrated in the region of a peninsula surrounded by Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe and Matchedosh Bay, in Southern Ontario.

The Hurons spoke a language that linguists include in the Iroquois family. The northeastern Iroquois languages thus had common but distant roots with Cherokee, spoken in the Northern Appalachians, and Tuscarona, spoken closer to the coasts of North Carolina and Virginia.

Northeast of Huronia vast swamps separated the rocky zone of the Canadian Shield from the arable lands cultivated by the Hurons. As they were farmers, they lived at the northernmost limits of the rich, fertile lands of Southern Ontario.

The people of the long houses

Champlain and Sagard estimated the population of Huronia to be 30 000, while *Relations des Jésuites*, instancing a census done in 1640, gives a number of 12 000, including both the Huron and Triononti peoples. Trigger determined this number to be 18 000, based on archeological and ethnographic information.

The Iroquois League or Confederation of Five Nations included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onandagas, Cayugas and Senecas. The Hurons, for their part, made up a confederation which was distinguished by the frequency of its inter-tribal

marriages and the sharing of its cultures. There were four Huron tribes: the Attignawatans in thirteen or fourteen villages; the Attingneenongnahaes in three or four villages; the Arhendarrhons, living in at least four villages; and another group, the Ataronchronons, who were not Hurons but who gathered near the Jesuit residence of Sainte-Marie for protection, to all appearances. Unlike the Iroquois, the Huron tribes lived side by side and shared the same hunting grounds.

According to the accounts of Champlain, Sagard, and *Relations des Jésuites*, there were between 18 and 25 villages in Huronia. They were fortified and contained up to 40 long houses. The Hurons built their villages on high grounds close to bodies of water.

Huron houses were six to nine metres wide, about nine metres high, and between 27 and 30 metres long. These houses were covered with pieces of cedar bark which were attached to a wood frame using a system of weaving. Each village contained at least two larger-sized houses. They served as residence for the war chief and the civil chief, who attended to domestic matters.

Huron society was matrilineal, meaning that when the father died, it was not his son who became chief of the clan, but the son of the deceased's sister.

There were eight clans: turtle, wolf, bear, beaver, deer, eagle, porcupine and snake. During the 19th century the Lorette Hurons maintained they stemmed from five tribes which were in turn subdivided into five clans (wolf, deer, bear, beaver and turtle).

Agriculture and foreign trade

Corn was the most important farming product in Huronia, followed by beans and squash. For the most part the women were responsible for producing the food eaten by the Hurons. They planted the seeds, eliminated the weeds, watched over the growing process and harvested the crops.

The older part of the village, century old houses line narrow winding roads.
Photo: Claire Dufour

The agricultural produce was stored in big barrels inside the long houses and became the common property of all residents.

The surplus yield was reserved for foreign trade, a vital activity for the Huron Confederation. Since frequent hostilities with the Iroquois made trading near impossible, the Hurons mainly exchanged goods with the Confederation of Neutral Nations, made up of tribes residing north of Lake Erie, and the Peruns who lived east of Huronia. In short, the Hurons held a trade monopoly over the entry of all goods coming into Ontario by means of the Saint Lawrence Valley axis. The nature of these exchanges was extremely varied. The Hurons received winter clothes, often decorated with porcupine quills, several different types of talismans, and raccoon or buffalo skins which they used for making clothing. In exchange, they traded corn, iron axes and necklaces to the Tionontatés and the Petuns.

Trips undertaken by the Hurons to exchange goods with other Amerindian tribes covered long distances — by the waterways of Lake Huron to the Algonquins, as far as Lakes Michigan and Superior, and into Central Québec. These trading activities were defined by a network of social conventions: exchange of gifts between trading tribes, courtesy visits, festivities, exchange of children to confirm pacts of friendship and reciprocity.

From Huronia to the Jeune Lorette Mission

The first real contacts between Hurons and Europeans date back to 1609 when Samuel de Champlain built a trading post on the Saint Lawrence and joined a group of Montagnais, Algonquins and Hurons to fight 200 Iroquois near Lake Champlain. The Hurons did not maintain any trade relations with the French until 1615, the year when Champlain decided to spend the winter in Huronia. The French then consolidated their alliance with the Hurons. Étienne Brûlé went to live in Huronia and Savignon, a Huron chief's brother, acted as interpreter for Champlain and went to France with him.

The period from 1616 to 1629 was distinguished by an increase in trading activities between Hurons and French. In 1624 a treaty was concluded by the French, Algonquins, Mohawks and Hurons, providing for the Saint Lawrence to be used freely for trading purposes. This was done through diplomatic action on the part of the Récollets and Jesuits who, although they were missionaries, were also the economic agents of an active development policy for New France. They acted as interpreters for the French. In 1628 a Royal Edict gave the control of New France to the Compagnie des Cent-Associés.

Between 1634 and 1639 several epidemics reduced the population of the Huron Confederation by one third. Measles, influenza and smallpox hit the peoples in frequent contact with the Europeans the hardest.

The decade of the 1640s was marked by more and more frequent Iroquois attacks on the Huron territory. In 1650 the Mohawks and the Senecas concluded a pact with the purpose of destroying the Huron Confederation. During the same period the Mohawks periodically attacked the northern Algonquin tribes. Wishing to obtain more furs because of insistent pressure from the Dutch, the Mohawks and Senecas were trying to build a vast hunting and trading territory. In wiping out the Huron Confederation the Senecas could hunt in Central Ontario and attack the Algonquin tribes living on the shores of Lake Huron. Similarly, the Mohawks hoped to take over the Montagnais and Abenaki territories. Confronted with this threat, the Hurons

attempted to conclude alliances with the Susquehannahs and the Onondagas.

In the fall of 1648 an Iroquois army of one thousand attacked the Huron villages of Saint-Louis, Saint-Ignace and Saint-Joseph. The survivers took refuge near the Sainte-Marie mission. Under the threat of Iroquois attacks, the converted Hurons and the Jesuits left Sainte-Marie for Gahoendoe (or Christian Island). About 330 families sought refuge there. Other Hurons went to live with the Tionnontates.

The winter of 1649-1650 was one of horror and famine. Many Hurons died from the combined effects of contagious diseases and malnutrition. In early March 1650, 300 Hurons left Gahoendoe for Québec City. During the trip several of them settled in Montréal and Trois-Rivières, but on July 28 most of them reached Québec City where they were fed and taken care of by the Jesuits and Ursulines. On March 19, 1651 they were granted possession of some land on Île d'Orléans belonging to Éléonore de Grand-Maison. They cleared and cultivated 120 hectares, thus ensuring their self-sufficiency for food.

Around 1657 the Hurons left Île d'Orléans for various destinations. Some of them settled at the Seigniory of Sillery which had been granted to them by Louis XIV in 1651. They were thrown out for the benefit of the Jesuits in 1660 and went to live in a fortified camp erected in the heart of Québec City. In 1667 they left Québec City for Beauport and then took refuge in Sainte-Foy until 1673. Shortly afterwards they moved to Ancienne-Lorette (1673-1697) and then to Jeune Lorette near the Saint-Charles River, the present-day site of Village-des-Hurons (the Huron Village).

The original area of Village-des-Hurons was considerably reduced when a white colonist from the area purchased some fringes of land suitable for cultivation. However, that was not the only chopping of their territory experienced by the Hurons down through the centuries. Since 1742 the Hurons had actually owned a

Richard Picard, an Amerindian police constable responsible for ensuring law and order in the village.
Photo: André Pichette

Jesuit title deed over a 650-hectare forest reserve located five kilometres from Lorette. This was sold to the Crown in 1904 in the context of a transaction which is still contested today.

Similarly, for more than a century (from 1791 to 1896) the Hurons demanded the right to have the Seigniory of Sillery returned to them after they were forced to leave because of the invading presence of the Jesuits and French colonists, but in vain. Around 1850 another territory had been granted to them in Rocmont Township; they used it for hunting and trapping purposes. The construction of a railway line, the establishment of private hunting and fishing clubs and zoning changes in Rocmont Township were among the factors which motivated the Hurons to abandon this land in 1904.

The Hurons today

The Village

Village-des-Hurons (the Huron Village) has 800 residents. The entire population of the Lorette Huron band, including the Amerindians living outside the reserve, is 1 250. Successive chopping of territories on the reserve has considerably reduced the inhabitable area. The Hurons have voiced a number of land claims to allow for the expansion required with regard to residential development.

Village-des-Hurons lies some ten kilometres from Québec City. It is divided into two parts: an older one where narrow streets contain hundred-year-old houses, businesses and the chapel. Further north, the other part extends as far as the Saint-Charles River; it is called « Kabir-Kouba ». Recent residential developments, the industrial park and the new Hôtaie (pronounced "ootay") school are found here. The immediate surroundings of the Saint-Charles River are used for recreational purposes — green spaces during the summer and cross-country ski trails in wintertime.

The village is internationally known for its production of handicraft articles, moccasins, slippers and snowshoes made by people of the area with the knowledge and skill to perpetuate the ancestral traditions. It is also a major meeting place for tourists in the region.

Housing

Village-des-Hurons enjoys a residential development programme run by political and administrative representatives of the Band Council which helps the Hurons acquire properties under favourable terms. There are loans from the Federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and thousand-dollar grants accompanied by preferential rate loans accorded by the Band Council. The success of this programme can be measured by the fact that in each of the last three years, six or seven new houses have been built.

Economic development

Down through time the Hurons have accorded a continuous interest to the production of articles with a utilitarian function. The women made mats used as beds out of reeds and corn leaves. They also produced a great variety of potteries. In wintertime the men made snowshoes, talismans and bows and arrows.

The exile of the Hurons and their settlement near Québec City resulted in the gradual abandonment of their farming-related subsistence activities. For this reason, making utilitarian articles for the sole benefit of the community rapidly turned into a commercial activity. Baskets and snowshoes were sold to American and Canadian tourists. Until the end of the 1950s the Hurons frequently left their village to go sell their handicrafts in Rivière-du-Loup or other tourist locations in Québec and the United States.

Village-des-Hurons firms supply a large portion of the snowshoes manufactured in Canada. Philippe Gros-Louis is one of the people who work in this field.
Photo: *Jacques Nadeau*

Since the beginning of the 1960s the production of canoes, snowshoes and moccasins has undergone considerable alterations. From the handicraft activity it was, it has become a real manufacturing industry by the creation of small specialized companies very often devoted to export; the largest of them have turnovers varying between a hundred thousand and a million dollars a year. A credit union opened in 1965 on community territory to offer Huron industrialists the necessary capital at reasonable rates for them to consider expanding their businesses and making them profitable.

However, the importance of this manufacturing industry does not mean that the criteria of quality and excellence distinguishing Huron handicraft production have been abandoned. Thus up to 60% of each article is made by hand by subcontractors (this includes snowshoe lacing and moccasin pleating) in order to give the object a hand-produced finish.

Handicrafts themselves have always been a very important practice in Village-des-Hurons and still play a choice role. Thus many Huron craftsmen, including several young people, are self-employed. Each craftsman has his specialty, his own particular form of expression. Some of them work and shape precious stones and bones to make jewellery or pipes; others make sweet grass baskets or superbly beaded embroideries enhanced with porcupine-quill or moose-hair braiding.

The sale of goods outside the community has meant that several small businesses could come into being and prosper; some of them combine both production and distribution phases under one roof.

Naturally, these businesses are devoted to export; they supply a very significant portion of the Canadian production of snowshoes and moccasins.

Education

Education is a major priority in Village-des-Hurons. The Band Council administers an education budget which comes from the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and is mainly intended as financial aid for students attending high schools, CEGEP and university outside the village.

Otherwise, Huron elementary school pupils go to school in the village. In 1982 a spacious modern school was inaugurated to replace the former one which had become outdated. It is equipped with a gymnasium and was named by the schoolchildren themselves: « H8taie » school. The word means *beaver* in the Huron language.

The technical characteristics of this school are quite simple. The foundations are concrete, the structure is made of steel and the sloping roof consists of prefabricated wood forms and asphalt tiles. However, upon the suggestion of those responsible for the school, a system of solar energy receiving devices was built into the south side of the building.

At present 125 Amerindian pupils from grades one to six attend the H8taie school, including some Montagnais children. Teachers are recruited by billboard advertising. If they are equally competent, a preference is given to hiring Huron instructors.

A large-scale undertaking of making all facets of schooling Amerindian is also in progress; this includes plastic arts, dance and introduction to the Huron culture. It was initiated by an education committee which is also now developing an amerindianization programme with the purpose of creating pedagogical material adapted to all socio-cultural characteristics of the Huron nation. It is expected that it will shortly be possible to offer introductory courses to the Huron language.

Traditional hunting and fishing activities

The Hurons have always accorded a great deal of importance to hunting, trapping and fishing activities. Old Huron trappers relate tales of long expeditions lasting several months, especially during the winter season, and which were not without risks.

Means of transportation were very diversified. In summertime canoes were used and portaging had to be done on a regular basis; during the winter dogs were used for pulling sleds. It was not unusual to travel as far as the Saguenay via different waterways including, for instance, the Jacques-Cartier River.

Since 1982 the Hurons who still practice hunting, trapping and fishing activities belong to the Association of Huron Hunters, Trappers and Fishermen. Numbering some 200 members, this Association has set itself two priority mandates: first negotiate to acquire specific hunting and fishing rights, and then institute the necessary procedures for obtaining the retrocession of lands which were historically part of the Huron nation's territory.

Cultural heritage: Ensuring the continuity

Mythology

Huron mythology reflects the wealth of this nation's culture and its complex history from the departure from Huronia to the final settlement at Village-des-Hurons. Thus the legendary tales relating the ancestors' history, their eventful lives and the creation of the world, were passed on from generation to generation, up to the present day. They always contributed to giving a concrete expression to the feeling of community identity peculiar to the Hurons, just as pictograms on the wampums symbolized the nation's heritage.

Huron mythology is also the expression of this people's spirituality. The beautiful myth about the creation of the world is a

The area behind the Village-des-Hurons church offers a peaceful site for the cemetery.
Photo: Jacques Nadeau

probing example. It is said that in the beginning there was nothing but an endless sea and a starless firmament. A woman fell from the sky and was rescued by the ocean gods. These beings of the sea, who were quadrupeds with a human appearance, then built an island on the back of the big turtle. This island became a continent and the little turtle created a passage under the earth so the sun and the moon could circulate from east to west. The woman, protected by the ocean divinities, gave birth to twins. One represented the spirit of good, the other the spirit of evil. They confronted one another in a dual to see which of good and evil would control the fate and destiny of the world. The good twin killed his brother and subsequently received the Amerindians on earth, while the deceased brother became responsible for the world of the dead.

These legends were also told by other tribes living near areas settled by the Huron people, although they were accompanied by different events. Thus the Senecas, Ojibways and Algonquins all recounted mythical tales which bore a great affinity with those of the Hurons.

Another myth, that of the great serpent at Village-des-Hurons, brought a new personality into play, Carcajou the Wolverine, a sly and sarcastic being whose greatest pleasure was playing tricks. In this story Carcajou, a drunkard lacking scruples, concluded a pact with the great serpent. The latter, a great spirit of the Huron nation, hated his sons and daughters because they had been baptized and had abandoned their ancestral religion. He vowed that the Huron population would never grow. In exchange for his soul and his contempt for Christianity, Carcajou found himself being offered wealth and sensuousness by the great serpent. Exasperated, the Hurons chased the great serpent from the Saint-Charles River, where his heavy sinuous body had already traced the shape of the falls, and he fled. It is said that he took refuge in Lac Tantané or Lac Saint-Joseph.

Since that day the population of Village-des-Hurons has never increased. The tale of the great serpent hence took place near the site of the present-day Amerindian community. Certain characteristics of the village's physical geography are thus explained, for instance, the configuration of the falls. Similarly, the Hurons call their river *Kabir-Kouba* to recall the great serpent.

Zacharie Vincent: Huron painter of the 19th century

Huron painter Zacharie Vincent was born in Village-des-Hurons on January 28, 1815. It was in this locality that he got married, brought up his children and ended his days; he died on October 9, 1896. He is above all remembered as a painter, although he probably had other skills. His work gives us a retrospective look at daily life in Village-des-Hurons during the 19th century.

To paintings portraying certain activities such as snowshoe lacing or making a birchbark canoe are added many self-portraits of Zacharie Vincent in traditional dress. His works are part of collections in the Château Ramezay, Musée du Québec and Abenaki Museum of Odanak.

Contemporary Huron artists

The Huron artists of today express contemporary concerns using various techniques (pottery, drawing, sculpture, engraving), with the ultimate objective of emphasizing several different perceptions and interpretations of the mythology and traditions belonging to the Huron culture.

Mireille Sioui, an artist who has already created a number of significant works,

began by studying at the École des beaux-arts de Québec in 1967 and 1968, and then obtained a B.A. in visual arts from Laval University. She has been engraving since 1968.

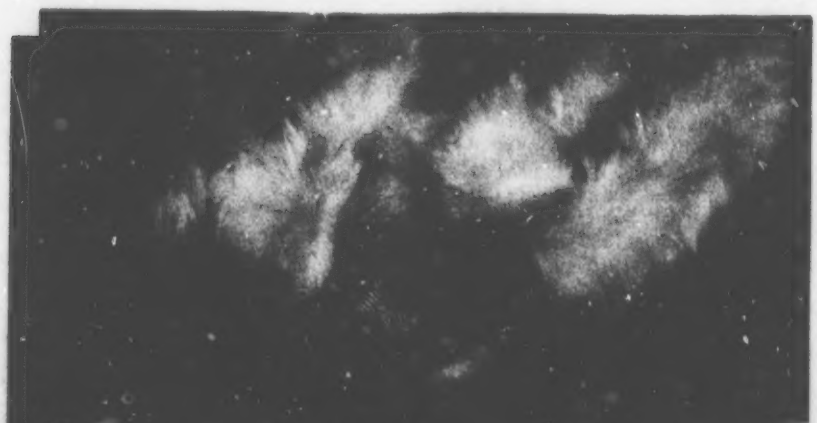
After she had won several competitions, the Federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs decided to purchase an etching that had been awarded two prizes: "In the House of T'handiaouich, the Little Turtle". This engraving is now exhibited with the works of sixty other Canadian Amerindian artists in the United Nations Hall in New York.

Among her other important creations should be remembered a wood engraving, "Eataeutsic, the First Woman", as well as other engravings, "Tsetsa and Tewaskare, the Twins", "The Corn Mask", "Okwessen the Partridge". She also produced the mural at the H8taie school.

Monique Picard has been interested in traditional pottery for the past six years. She creates masks whose shapes and characteristics are evocative of the Iroquois, Algonquin and Huron cultures. Her creations inspired by the Huron culture include a mask with an opening for the mouth which recalls the ancestral activity of blowing on the ashes to bring a fire to life. Monique Picard also takes an interest in masks symbolizing the Huron clans and cosmogony. Among her works should be noted her beaver, bear, turtle and wolf masks.

For her pottery creations this artist has taken over the characteristics of a primitive cooking process which required neither oven nor glazing. A hole was simply dug in the sand, and the article was completely covered and cooked in a fire of twigs, leaves and pieces of wood. In this way the pottery was smoked and blackened little by little.

Monique Picard uses an electric oven with a very slow cooking method which enables her to recover the specific characteristics of this primitive cooking process. However, she fully reproduces the subsequent steps peculiar to the ancestral techniques. After smoking her potteries in



"Manitou, do not allow me to criticize my neighbour until I have worn his mocassins for a full moon" (D. Sioui)
Photo: *Claire Dufour*

containers, using branches and dead leaves, she lets them cool for one day. The surfaces of the article are then rubbed for ten to twelve hours with shells or bones to give them a hard smooth texture and make the pores waterproof.

Rolland Sioui sculpts steatite pipes. He is the inventor of most of his models which have already been exhibited at the Québec municipal library. The federal government has also purchased some of his pieces with the intention of exhibiting them at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa.

Manon Sioui is a 21-year-old painter. Her works are influenced by Huron mythology and Amerindian spirituality. Among her creations should be noted "The Birchbark Canoe, Kan: ya", "Mother Earth", "Carcajou the Wolverine and the Serpent".

The Village-des-Hurons museum

The Village-des-Hurons museum, which is situated in an old house near the church, was set up in the summer of 1980 by the Arouanne Ethnological Museum Committee. This museum groups the significant pieces of the Huron heritage under one roof. On the ground floor visitors will find traditional objects recalling the Huron's daily life in the past. They can observe moulds for basket making, traps used by trappers, snowshoes of various types and shapes, and a beautiful selection of old ash and sweet grass baskets.

Liturgical clothing belonging to the Huron chapel is exhibited in another showcase. This magnificent collection includes a white leather chasuble decorated with dyed moose-hair embroideries.

On the upper floor, separate rooms contain reconstructions of the life of an Amerindian family living in a long house during the Huronia period, the different steps in making a canoe, and a natural environment where one can observe and identify stuffed animals and recall the specific animal life of Québec forests.

Mireille Sioui, painter and engraver sketched the mascot Skatewati, a legendary character of Village-des-Hurons.
Photo: *Claire Dufour*

Traditional Huron dress: a black gown, sash with arrow design and a feather headdress for men; a long skin with a matching tunic and gown decorated with embroidery for women.
Photo: *Claire Dufour*

On request visitors can view a video tape on the industrial and handicraft activities of snowshoe, canoe and moccasin manufacturing as well as a slide show on the treasures in the vault of the village church. Those who wish to can ask to see this vault adjoining the sacristy of the Huron chapel where they will discover precious gold- and silverware dating from the 17th and 18th centuries and which belonged to the Jesuits in New France.

Traditional Huron dress

Traditional Huron dress changed considerably through contact with the Europeans. The dress worn by the people of Huronia which Trigger describes in *Les Relations des Jésuites*, quoting Father Lejeune, and the one represented in the 19th century paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff and Lord Elgin have very little in common except for the highly characteristic chief's headdress, which has also varied somewhat down through the ages. It is a head covering with a wide leather headband embroidered with flowers made of either beads or moose hair. Feathers are arranged to cover the top of the head. These are rooster or partridge feathers which are split down the middle, as the nerve was removed to give the headdress a curly look.

In 1979 five women of Village-des-Hurons decided to submit a project to the federal government to undertake research on their nation's traditional dress. Using very old photographs dating from the beginning of the century or based on old women's accounts, the group of women made replicas of both men's and women's traditional dress. These costumes which can be admired in a display cabinet on Band Council premises are quintessential evidence of a loyalty to origins.

The Huron chapel

The Village-des-Hurons church is an important testimony of both the Amerindian and the Québec heritage. When the Hurons arrived at Jeune Lorette in 1697 they built a chapel with their own hands. Furthermore they had brought a number of liturgical and devotional articles from their former church in Ancienne-Lorette.

Rolland P. Sioui busy removing the fat from a beaver skin.
Photo: *Claire Dufour*

The chapel was begun in 1700, but was not completed until 1710. Made of wood, it was used until 1730 when it was replaced with a new chapel, this time made of stone. Subsequently a stone sacristy was added to the church, and then at the beginning of the 20th century a side chapel was built on and the sacristy extended.

The existence of this church in Village-des-Hurons was threatened on several occasions and it is through the Hurons — their persistence and the attachment to their heritage — that we have been able to bear witness to its history. In 1862 the chapel was seriously damaged by fire. After the generosity of Governor General Lord Monk was called upon several times, the chapel was restored and reopened in 1865. The following year the bell and steeple, which had been heavily damaged by fire, were replaced. It is this bell which still chimes 125 years later.

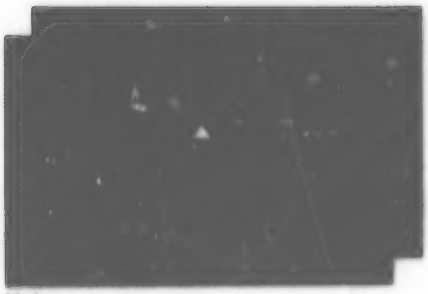
The heritage value of this historical property stems not only from the undeniable architectural quality of the church, but also the liturgical furniture it contains. The many pieces stored in the vault or which can be observed in the chapel itself actually distinguish the liturgical art of New France's beginnings. In 1957 the Historical Monuments Commission classified the Huron chapel as a historical monument. Since then various restoration and renovation work projects have been undertaken to preserve it from the wear and tear of time.

Huron history, material objects, traditions and myths naturally attest the very real existence of the culture. However, much more then this, they actually express the Huron's deeprooted desire to fuse their solidarity. It is no doubt this solidarity which has alone enabled these first inhabitants of the country, fighting against adversity, to protect their cultural identiry and make it thrive. This brochure should give both Québec residents and tourists passing through the wish to share and learn more about the rich cultural heritage of this nation which is intimately linked with events surrounding the discovery of the New World.

Chapter 6

The Micmacs

Raymond Jérôme is collecting sweet grass for use in several handicraft objects.
Photo: Michel Gascon



Maria.
Photo: *Michel Gascon*

History

The Micmacs and the Wabenaki Confederacy

In 1534 the aboriginal peoples along Canada's eastern coast already knew what the Europeans wanted from them. Jacques Cartier, in that same year, described how the Souriqois held up a beaver skin attached to a stick, indicating their willingness to trade. Prior to Cartier's arrival, European fishermen (Basque and French primarily) had already made contact with the aboriginal peoples along the coast. « Souriqois » was the first name used by the French in referring to the Micmac peoples.

The Micmacs originally called themselves « Mig'mawag », which means « People of the Dawn ». Later, the British interpreted « Mig'mawag » to mean « Micmac », which is the term that continues to be used when referring to the native people of the Gaspé Peninsula in Québec. A people of the eastern forests and belonging to the Algonquian linguistic family, the Micmacs are the dominant aboriginal group in the Maritime Provinces.

At the time of early European contact, the Micmacs belonged to the Wabenaki Confederacy which also embraced the Maliseet, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and Abenaki nations. They populated a territory which included the whole of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, most of New Brunswick (with the exception of the St. John River Valley), and the southern portion of the Gaspé Peninsula, in Québec. The Maliseets, who are closely related in language and culture to the Micmacs, occupied the land along the St. John River in New Brunswick. The Penobscots, Passamaquoddys and Abenakis lived in the region which today makes up the New England States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts.

Prior to European contact, the Micmacs were a semi-nomadic people whose livelihood was based on fishing, hunting and trapping; these activities varied with the changing seasons. However, the arrival of European fishermen, missionaries and traders brought about drastic changes in their way of life.

During the sixteenth century European fishermen made new tools and weapons available to the Micmacs, but, at the same time, they introduced diseases such as smallpox, measles and tuberculosis.

Early in the seventeenth century European missionaries instilled their religious beliefs in the Micmacs. On June 24, 1610, in Port Royal, Acadia (Nova Scotia), Membertou, the Grand Chief of the Micmacs, was baptized as a Catholic.

As a result of his conversion Catholicism was accepted throughout the Micmac territories and the French became allies of the Micmacs.

During the entire period of the fur trade and the wars between French and British, the Micmacs remained close allies of the French. In 1760 a final battle involving several French and British ships took place in the Restigouche Bay and put an end to the Seven Years' War. Following their victory, the British immediately made peace with the Micmacs settled at Restigouche and near New Richmond.

Annual cycle of the nomadic Micmacs

The Micmacs were essentially nomadic; they followed the various migrations of game living both on land and in the water, and did not practice agriculture as such. Moreover, during slow periods towards the end of the year they picked wild berries.

Their occupations varied depending on the time of year. In December and January they fished for cod and smelt along the coasts and in the bays. In mid-March or early April they returned to the coast to gather scallops, mussels, clams and crab. During the months of April and May and until mid-June they fished for smelt, lake sturgeon, salmon, herring, brook trout and alewife. From mid-June to mid-July they fished for cod, shad and mackerel. From July to September they picked wild berries. About mid-September the Micmacs went eel-fishing in the rivers where the latter spawned.

With the expectation of fall and winter, the Micmacs moved into the interior to start hunting big game and trapping small game. They hunted species such as moose, deer, caribou, bear and partridge. Using a great deal of ingenuity, they trapped various types of animals: beaver, otter, ermine, fox, mink, wolf, bear, porcupine, skunk, squirrel and hare. They also hunted migratory birds. Furthermore, they followed the migrations of a number of marine mammals: dolphin, porpoise, walrus and several varieties of seal.

Net fishing in Maria.
Photo: Michel Gaume

The Micmacs used everything they obtained from their fishing and hunting expeditions: flesh, skin, fur, bones, tusks, teeth, entrails, feet and tendons. The excess food was dried or smoked in anticipation of difficult times.

Traditional way of life

The constant travelling done by the Micmacs made it necessary for them to have suitable equipment. They travelled by birchbark canoe during the summer months and used snowshoes in wintertime. By the same token, the various hunting, fishing and trapping techniques adequately met their needs. Their skill was put to good use during their beats, group fishing and trap making. They had bows and arrows, spears, knives and tomahawks for hunting; and hooks, harpoons, clubs and dams made of wood or strong reeds for fishing. For trapping purposes they made a number of different instruments: snares, devices with weights (either falling or on springs), hidden holes and traps.

Their ingenuity was also shown in their light mobile homes. Wigwams were relatively simple to make and the cover of the birchbark or skin structure could easily be kept and used at the next camp.

Micmac dress was also well adpated to the climate and their activities. Their clothing, which was made of leather and furs, included moccasins, leggings, breeches, skirts, jackets with or without sleeves, winter coats, mittens, caps and hoods.

Tools and containers were made with easily obtained raw materials. Tools were shaped from untreated minerals, bones of big game, antlers from animals of the deer family, teeth belonging to carnivores and wood from several tree types. Birch bark, reeds, willow (wicker), plant fibres, hard wood and baked clay were used for making containers.

The Micmacs made good use of fire which provided more than light and heat.

Jeanne Martin from Maria is making small brooms from sweet grass.
Photo: Michel Gascon

It also served as a means of protection against wild animals; it was used for cooking food and preserving it, either by smoking or drying using very little heat; it was required for making clay and terracotta vases; it helped sever tree trunks which were too big for stone axes; it was used for hardening tools and other items made of wood, bone and horn, or making various types of crude metal jewellery and ornaments. Finally, fire was an essential element in any religious, social or political ceremony.

The Micmacs' nomadic lifestyle fostered the development of a social and political organization centred upon the family, the clan and the band. Authority was delegated to the head of the family and the chief of the band. While the Micmac chiefs had privileges and social responsibilities, they were perceived much more as leaders and wisemen than absolute and feared masters. Moreover, they were continually judged by their actions. Unhappiness or misery among their subjects would jeopardize recognition of their authority or competence as chiefs. They generally qualified among the best hunters and fishermen in the band.

Before converting to Catholicism, the Micmacs had a series of beliefs and legends which assumed a sacred character and were constantly related to their very existence and their natural environment. Any important activity was preceded by religious rites. The regular offerings made to their gods were representative of a communion with the spiritual world.

Certain cults in particular were practised; the Micmacs worshipped the Bear, the « Great Hare », Fire and especially the Sun, to whom newborn children were presented at the spring equinox. They also recognized good and evil spirits. Their supernatural and legendary hero was Glouskap, the master of men and animals. The god who made them, « the Spirit of the Spirit », had created the universe, the sun, the earth and the moon before finally giving life to mankind and the animal kingdom.

The medicine man played the role of mediator between the gods and simple

Louis A. Martin makes baskets from ash strips.
Photo: Michel Gascon

humans. He interpreted dreams, directed all religious ceremonies and dances, questioned the supernatural powers, looked into the future and advised the warriors. Finally, he cured the sick, using magic plants, and practised exorcism and magic with incantations related to the Micmac nation's religious mythology.

Micmac communities in Québec

Restigouche

Restigouche is located 115 kilometres southwest of Bonaventure along the north shore of the Ristigouche River. There are approximately 1 500 Micmacs in Restigouche; they share a territory of about 9 000 acres.

Maria

Maria is located 80 kilometres east of Restigouche along the north shore of the Cascapedia River. Approximately 500 Micmacs live in Maria, within an area covering some 400 acres.

Gaspé

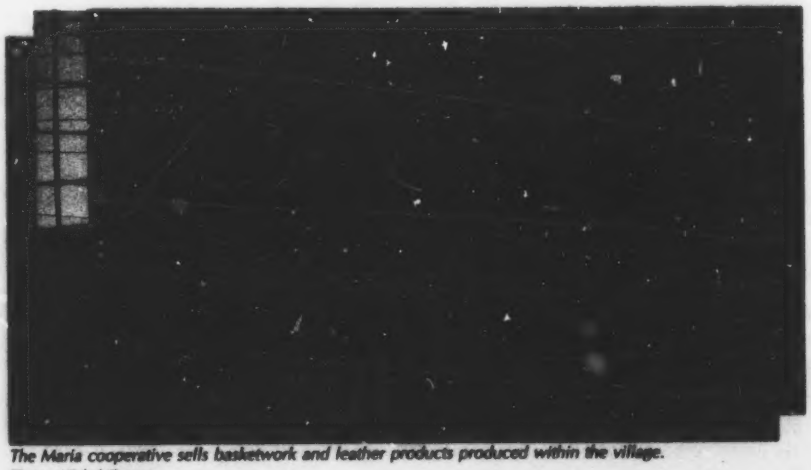
In the Gaspé region, there are Micmacs in Saint-Majorique, Pointe-Navarre and Gaspé itself. The Gaspé Band has about 150 members and is one of the two Bands in Québec that have no village or establishment; the other is the Algonquin Band of Grand-Lac-Victoria.

Social and economic characteristics

Local government

Each of the Micmac communities has an elected chief and council who administer municipal services similar to those of a municipal mayor and council.

The chief and council system was created through section 91-24 of the Canada Constitution which set aside lands reserved for Indians and established an « Indian Act » outlining the responsibilities of all chief and council systems for Indian communities throughout Canada.



The Maria cooperative sells basketwork and leather products produced within the village.
Photo: *Michel Gascon*

Health and education

Micmac people in Restigouche receive most of their health services through the Soldier Memorial Hospital and Hotel Dieu Hospital in Campbellton, New Brunswick, which is just opposite Restigouche on the south shore of Ristigouche River.

Campbellton is only one kilometre from Restigouche via the inter-provincial bridge which provides for easy transportation between the two communities. The Micmacs in Restigouche also receive all their schooling through institutions in Campbellton. Restigouche has Pointe-à-la-Croix as its Québec neighbouring town and the two communities exchange numerous services between them.

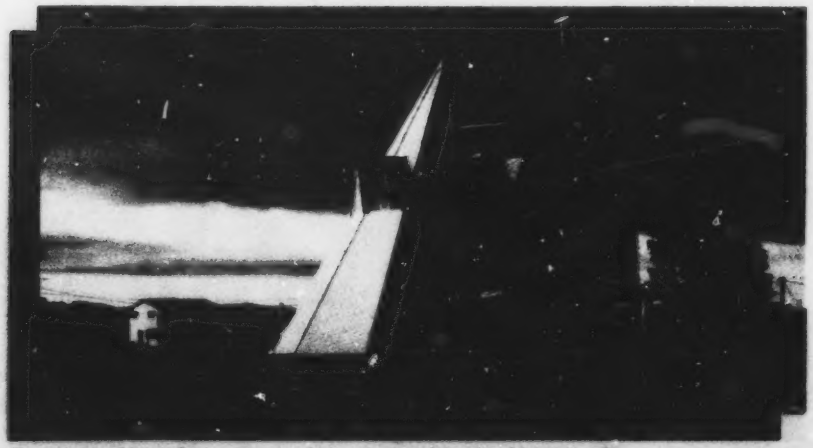
The Micmac community of the Maria reserve receives all of its health services through the Sacred Heart Hospital which is located in the nearby municipality of Maria. Unlike Restigouche, Maria has its own local school which is named « Wejgwapnia » and through which the Micmacs provide schooling for children in their community from nursery school to grade 4. Their grade 5 and secondary level students attend New Richmond High School and several other elementary and high schools in nearby municipalities.

The Micmac of the Gaspé area are served by the same health services as the non-aboriginal population.

Economy

As was mentioned, Micmac life was based mainly on fishing, hunting and trapping — essentially seasonal activities. However, colonization, land expropriations and industrialization have drastically changed their traditional way of life. Like most of the aboriginal communities throughout Québec and Canada, the Micmacs in Restigouche and Maria do not have any solid economic base.

A small number of Micmacs work within the municipal services administered by



The citizens of Maria have a church which reflects traditional architectural style.
Photo: Michel Gascon

the chief and council in Restigouche and Maria.

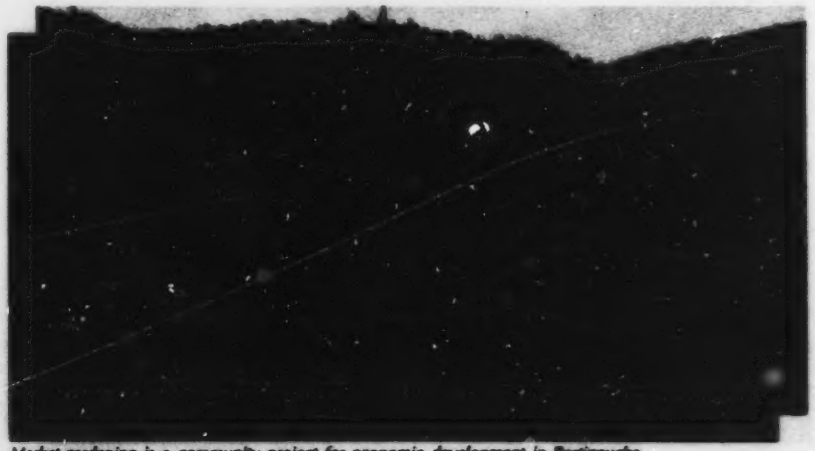
The salmon fishing season for the Restigouche and Maria Micmacs normally starts in the middle of June each year and reaches its peak by the end of July. However, salmon fishing does not provide them with adequate economic benefits. Micmac fishermen using nets to catch their salmon on the Ristigouche and Cascapedia rivers must comply with strict quotas under wildlife conservation legislation enacted on both the provincial and federal levels. The objective of the conservation laws is to maintain an adequate supply of salmon in several rivers.

The Micmacs have replaced their birchbark wigwams with modern family homes. This provides a handful of Micmac carpenters with seasonal employment in Restigouche and Maria.

In recent years many members of the male population in Restigouche have entered the construction industry as ironworkers. They travel throughout North America erecting steel structured buildings and bridges.

Since 1980, the Micmacs of Maria (both men and women) have been working in increasing numbers as guides, game wardens and cooks with the Society of the Cascapedia Salmon Fisheries. This Society is a corporate agency managed jointly by the Micmacs of Maria and several municipalities located along the shores of the Cascapedia River. It administers several salmon outfitting camps which are leased to interested tourists.

Several Micmac families are also self-employed as black ash and sweet grass basket weavers. This has been a traditional industry for Micmacs throughout the Maritimes since the fur trade ceased. As for the Micmacs of Gaspé they find employment opportunities in local industries.



Market-gardening is a community project for economic development in Restigouche.
Photo: Bernard Beaupré

Micmac girl.
Photo: Michel Gascon

Cultural aspects of the Micmacs

Arts and crafts

For Micmacs in Restigouche, traditional handicrafts are not a major concern. Only a handful of people make handicrafted beaded leather items, and there is only one privately owned arts and crafts gift shop in Restigouche.

On the other hand, the Micmacs in Maria make a variety of handicrafted beaded leather products, black ash and sweet grass baskets, as well as snowshoes. They own the Handicraft Gift Shop, a cooperative which distributes their baskets to markets throughout the United States and Europe.

Sports and recreation

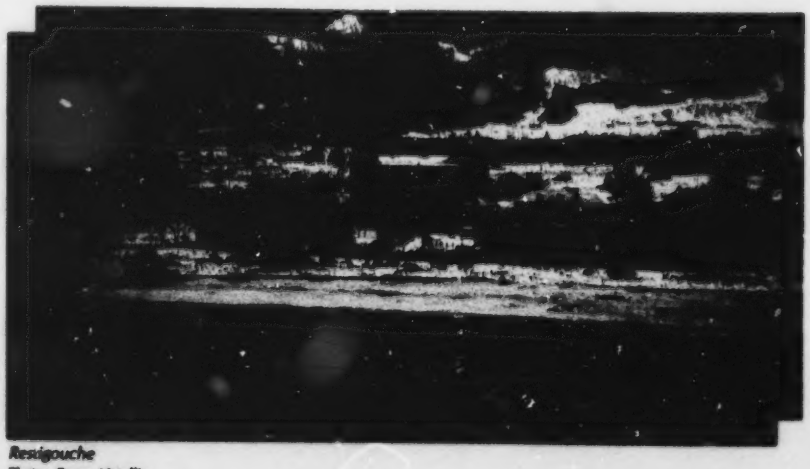
The Micmacs participate in various sports and recreational activities such as golf, swimming, hockey and other modern games. Although they do not have an aboriginal sport of their own, they do recognize the game of baseball as their traditional favourite.

In the communities there are several male and female baseball teams which compete annually in local baseball tournaments. They also participate in annual inter-territorial baseball tournaments with the Micmacs throughout the Maritime Provinces.

Cultural centres

Québec's three Micmac communities have been attempting to revive their culture since the beginning of the 1980s when each of them established a small cultural centre. At present, these communities are primarily concerned with the development of teaching materials which will enable them to preserve their language.

In fact, the Micmacs might have easily lost their language were it not for their participation in the annual celebration of St. Ann's Day. St. Ann, mother of the



Restigouche
Photo: Roger Metallic

Virgin Mary, is the patron saint of the Micmacs.

Since the early 1600s, the chiefs, the councils and the Micmacs at large have been gathering together shortly before each St. Ann's Day to review the events of the previous year and discuss relations among their various communities. The celebrations are held on an alternate basis in Chapel Island on Lake Bras d'Or; Cape Breton, Nova Scotia; Lennox Island off Prince Edward Island; and Burnt Church in New Brunswick.

On July 26, 1910 several thousand Micmacs from the Maritime Provinces gathered in Restigouche, Québec to celebrate the tricentenary of the baptism of Grand Chief Membertou.

Chapter 7

The Mohawks

Watching this boy from Kahnawake one might believe that the sense of balance is innate to the Mohawks.
Photo: André de Repentigny

Students of Kahnawake.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

In 1535, Jacques Cartier travelled up the St. Lawrence where he visited the Mohawk village of Stadacona near the preser site of Québec City. In September of that year, he sailed further up the St. Lawrence where he visited another Mohawk village at Hochelaga which now forms a part of the city of Montréal.

These two villages were part of the Mohawk territory which was composed of approximately nine million acres of land. The main areas of settlement were along the St. Lawrence River in the north and the Mohawk River in the south.

The Mohawks, who were commonly referred to as Iroquois by the French, formed a League of Five Nations of the people of the Longhouse several generations prior to the arrival of Europeans on the North American continent. The Oneidas, "Standing Stone People", had their villages west of the Mohawks around Oneida Lake. The Onondagas, "Peoples of the Hills", settled along Onondaga Creek; the Cayugas, "Great Pipe People", by Cayuga Lake; the Senecas, "People of the Great Mountain", alongside Canandaigua Lake.

The Hotinonsonni

The name Mohawk, originated with the Algonquin people and was later adopted by the English, French, Dutch and Americans, who interpreted the name to mean "man-eater". The correct name the Mohawks themselves used was "Kanienkehaka", meaning "People of the Flint". Throughout history, the People of the Flint nation have been referred to as "Mohawks", until they more or less accepted the name in the same manner as when they are called "Indians". The name "Onkwehonwe", which means "original people", is preferred by Mohawks to the term "Indians". The Five nations refer to themselves as the "Hotinonsonni" which translated into English means "The People of the Longhouse". The French used the term "Iroquois Confederacy" while the British used the term "Six Nations Confederacy" when referring to the Hotinonsonni.

In the 1700's, the Tuscaroras, "the People of the Shirt", were accepted by the Hotinonsonni as the sixth nation. The Hotinonsonni allied themselves into one League. They compared themselves to a long bark house, where there would be five fireplaces, but all would form one family. The Mohawks are the keepers of the eastern door of that Longhouse. The Onondagas, in the centre, are the firekeepers, and they are the capital of the League. The Senecas are keepers of the western door.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, the Iroquois subsisted mainly as farmers as well as by hunting, fishing and

trapping. However, the early 1600's brought European settlers to North America as well as a large demand for furs for the European market. The Dutch, later the British, established a trading centre at Albany, N.Y. while the French did their trading at Montreal. As a result of the fur trade, the Iroquois became involved in four major wars with the Huron, Algonquin, Ottawa and Montagnais nations who were allies of the French from 1608 to 1666. During the fur trade, many Jesuit priests entered into Iroquois territory with the objective of establishing missions and christianizing the Iroquois. In fact, it was in 1667 with the establishment of peace between the Iroquois and the French that a group of Catholic Iroquois, who were predominately Mohawk, settled at Kentake where the Jesuits had built a home for their elderly priests. In time, more French families settled at Kentake which is now known as Laprairie.

In 1676, the Mohawks moved a few kilometres west to Kentake and created a new village which they called Kahnawake. This Mohawk village was moved westwards twice, in 1690 and 1696 and to its present location finally in 1716. It is there that Kateri Tekakwitha is entombed in the Saint Francis Xavier Mission church.

Kateri Tekakwitha was born in April 1656 at Ossernenon, today Auriesville in New York State. In 1660, a serious epidemic of small pox struck her native village which was then moved two kilometres westwards. In 1666, the French burned down the village and, once again the Mohawks had to move to a new site on the other bank of the Mohawk River, near present-day Fonda, N.Y.. It was from here, where the people were hostile to Catholicism, that Kateri departed, in 1675, crossing the Mohawk Valley to join a group of Catholic Mohawks in Kentake. The following year she went to live in Kahnawake with the people of Kentake and she died there a few years later, in 1680. Pope Pius XII declared her venerable in 1943 and she was beatified in 1980 by Pope John Paul II.

The North American Indian Travelling College of Akwesasne houses a museum, where are depicted among other things the various scenes of everyday Iroquois life. Here a women's council is depicted.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

In 1721, a group of Mohawks migrated from Kahnake to an Algonquin village near the Lake of Two Mountains. By 1755, the village became predominately Mohawk and it was named Kanesatake (Oka) by the Mohawks. In 1747, the Bear clan from the Mohawk village of Kahnawake began migrating to Akwesasne (St. Regis). In 1752, a Jesuit mission was established in Akwesasne which was named after Saint Jean Francis Regis.

The Bear clan is one of three clans that form the Mohawk nation, the Turtle clan and the Wolf clan being the two others. Each individual of the Mohawk nation is represented and protected by one of the three clans. Each clan selects a clan mother who is responsible for the nominations of candidates for chieftainship of their respective clans. An individual cannot enter into marriage with another individual from the same clan. All Iroquois society has been established on a matrilineal basis.

Mohawk communities in Québec

Kahnawake

Kahnawake is located eight kilometres southwest of Montréal. There are about thirteen-thousand acres of land at Kahnawake which has a population of approximately five thousand Mohawks. Kahnawake is similar to most urban areas on the south-shore of the St. Lawrence with the exception that its roadways are neither named nor numbered.

The expansion of Canada's and Québec's transportation systems severely affected all Mohawk territories.

In 1889, the Canadian Pacific Railway constructed a bridge over the St. Lawrence River from Lachine to Kahnawake where it continued its railway system through Kahnawake eastward to Côte St. Catherine and southwestward to Châteauguay.

Kanesatake.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

In the early 1930's, the Québec government constructed the Mercier Bridge over the St. Lawrence River from Ville LaSalle to Kahnawake creating highways through Kahnawake, eastward to Côte St. Catherine and westward to Châteauguay.

In 1955, the Government of Canada authorized the expropriation of approximately thirteen hundred acres of Kahnawake territory, most of which was prime farmland, for the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The construction of the St. Lawrence finally separated the Mohawks of Kahnawake from the famed "Lachine Rapids". It must be remembered that a team of Indian paddlers with their canoe could travel from the mouth of the St. Lawrence River up to the Great Lakes. The St. Lawrence Seaway was constructed as a joint project between the U.S.A. and Canada which provided the U.S.A. with access to the Atlantic Ocean via the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

Kanesatake

Kanesatake is located forty kilometres west of Montréal. There are about two thousand three hundred acres of land at Kanesatake which has a population of approximately nine hundred Mohawks.

Unlike Kahnawake, Kanesatake's roadways are named and numbered and it could thus be mistaken as being a part of the nearby municipality of Oka.

The Mohawks in Kanesatake have been prevented from developing their lands because an Order of Sulpician priests nearby Kanesatake are claiming ownership of the lands that the Mohawks have inhabited since 1721.

Kanesatake and Kahnawake jointly share another territory which is known as Doncaster, located about sixty kilometres northwest of Montréal. There are approximately twenty thousand acres of land at Doncaster, mainly woodlands and uninhabited. It is used as a hunting and fishing territory by the Mohawks of Kanesatake and Kahnawake.

Fort Saint-Louis was built in 1725 by the French to protect converted Iroquois.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

Akwesasne

Akwesasne is located sixty kilometres southwest of Valleyfield. Of the entire area of Akwesasne about seven thousand five hundred acres are within the boundaries of Québec while the remainder of Akwesasne is situated within the boundaries of Ontario and the State of New York. On November 19 1794, the Jay Treaty was signed between the United States of America and England establishing the international borderline that divides Akwesasne today between the U.S.A. and Canada. Akwesasne was divided again between the provinces of Ontario and Québec in 1867 when Canada was formed.

There are approximately one thousand five hundred Mohawks living in the St. Regis village and Snye areas of Akwesasne which are located within the boundary of Québec. Approximately four thousand five hundred Mohawks live in the Racquette Point and Hogansburg areas which are located within the State of New York. Another one thousand five hundred Mohawks live in the Cornwall Island area of Akwesasne which is located in Ontario.

Akwesasne is similar to other urban areas of northeastern New York and, like Kanesatake, it could be mistaken to be a part of the nearby municipality of Hogansburg, N.Y. As was done at Kahnawake, lands at Akwesasne were also expropriated to widen the channels of the river for the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Social and economic characteristics

Local government

Each of the Mohawk communities has an elected Chief and Council who administer municipal services similar to those of a municipality.

A significant difference between the Chief and Council system and the municipal Mayor and Council system is their respective legislative origin.

Kahnawake has granted a place of honour to Kateri Tekakwitha. A school and a hospital centre have been named after her. The latter will soon be replaced by a new hospital following an agreement with the Québec government.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

Mohawk workers, specialized in the construction of buildings and metal-frame bridges, work at heights from 6 to 500 metres and must keep their balance on steel beams barely 10 inches in width.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

The Chief and Council system was created through section 91-24 of Canada's Constitution which set aside lands reserved for Indians and which established an "Indian Act" that outlines the responsibilities of all Chief and Council systems for Indian communities throughout Canada. The municipal Mayor and Council system was created by provincial legislatures as in the case of Québec.

In each of the Mohawk communities approximately fifty-percent of the population resorts to their traditional form of government through the Hotinonsonni. They govern themselves through the "Kaianerekowa" which, translated into English, means "The Great Law of Peace". The Kaianerekowa defines the constitutional responsibilities of the Hotinonsonni; all their people, women as well as men, are represented and have control of their government. Historians have recently admitted that the government of the United States of America was patterned from the Kaianerekowa of the Hotinonsonni which is a current form of democratic government.

Health and education

Each of the Mohawk communities has access to all health and education services offered by Québec. In fact, Kahnawake residants receive most of their health services through the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre, located in Kahnawake, which administers a hospital providing long-term care for chronically ill patients and a medical centre with a variety of preventive health programs for the community of Kahnawake. The Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre receives most of its operating revenues from Québec's Ministère des Affaires Sociales (Social Affairs Department). The Mohawks of Kahnawake and the Québec government have recently reached an agreement for the construction of a new hospital which will be administered by the Mohawks themselves.

Kanesatake and Akwesasne residents receive their health services from nearby municipalities.

In regard to education, Kahnawake's youth receive all of their education, kindergarten through secondary, in Kahnawake. Kanesatake and Akwesasne, each with a much smaller population than Kahnawake, provide only kindergarten and elementary education to their respective youth populations.

Economy

Colonization, land expropriations and industrialization have deprived the Mohawk communities of enjoying their traditional way of subsistence as farmers of the land. The principal form of local employment in each community is in the public sector.

In Kahnawake, there are approximately three hundred and fifty permanent employees in places such as the administration office of the Chief and Council, Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre, Survival School and the local radio station. Those employed in Kanesatake and Akwesasne in the public sector are much fewer in number than Kahnawake, again, because of the difference in population.

Kahnawake and Akwesasne have several privately owned golf clubs, service stations, and medium-size grocery stores, located within their respective communities which provide employment for a small number of Mohawks. Several modern houses are constructed each year in the three Mohawk communities and provide a handful of local Mohawk carpenters with employment. The majority of the adult male population of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne are employed outside their respective communities as ironworkers in North America's construction industry. The Mohawks became employed as ironworkers as early as 1889 during the construc-

tion of the Canadian Pacific Railway bridge which spans the St. Lawrence River at Lachine-Kahnawake.

Mohawk ironworkers encountered their first major disaster on August 29, 1907, when the southern portion of the Québec Bridge, which was under construction, collapsed and killed ninety six men of whom thirty-three were Mohawks from Kahnawake.

Mohawk ironworkers continue to travel as far north as Alaska, south to Florida, west to Vancouver, B.C. and California in the U.S., east to New Brunswick and southeast to Connecticut in the U.S., where they erect steel structured buildings and bridges at altitudes from twenty to fifteen hundred feet while walking on steel beams only four inches wide.

The United States government recognizes aboriginal people in both the U.S.A. and Canada as North American Indians with special rights that were agreed to by treaties, such as the Jay Treaty of 1794 which stated that aboriginal people would not be affected by the borderline that was established between the U.S.A. and Great Britain, and now, Canada. As such, Mohawks of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne are free to travel and work in the U.S.A. without having to acquire an employment or resident visa from the U.S.A. government. Unlike the U.S.A., the Canadian government does not recognize the rights of aboriginal people which are stated in the Jay Treaty of 1794.

More recently both male and female Mohawks have been graduating from universities in professions such as medicine, law, business and social sciences. However, most of these persons must seek employment outside their communities because the limited economy of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne does not require that much professional skill. Aboriginal people throughout Canada are faced with similar employment problems as those of the Mohawks because of restrictions in Canada's Indian Act.

Ronald Roundpoint of Akwesasne is busy making a lacrosse stick. Here he is shaping the wood to give it the special form of a stick.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

Canada's Indian Act states that all lands reserved for Indians and any immovable property on said lands are not subject to seizure by non-Indians. As a result of this legislation, any non-Indian financial institution such as a bank, could not make a financial loan to an Indian that requires a guarantee by utilizing his or her land and/or house as collateral. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for an Indian entrepreneur to develop any private enterprise which requires capital investment.

For example, the development of a restaurant which requires a fair amount of capital investment by a Mohawk in Kahnawake is almost impossible unless he or she has sufficient savings or, for example, inherited a sizeable amount of money. Thus, it would also be difficult for the Mohawks to re-establish their traditional economy as farmers of the land because agricultural development requires a large amount of capital investment.

Cultural aspects of the Mohawks

Arts and crafts

Mohawks in Kahnawake and Kanesatake are recognized for their excellent wood carved artifacts and handicrafted beaded and leather clothing.

Akwesasne's Mohawks are widely known for producing their handicrafted black ash splint and sweet grass basketry.

There are several arts and crafts specialists in each of the Mohawk communities who derive their income while at home from making traditional artifacts and handicrafts which are often purchased by local Mohawk businessmen who own small arts and crafts retail shops. There are several arts and crafts retail shops in each of the Mohawk communities where traditional artifacts and handicrafts can be purchased as souvenirs.

Worker in Kahnawake.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

Sports and recreation

The Mohawks of Kahnawake, Kanesatake, and Akwesasne participate in a variety of sports and recreational activities such as golf, baseball, swimming, hockey and most other modern games. However, lacrosse can be recognized as their traditional favourite during the summer months.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in North America, lacrosse was recognized as a spiritual event by most aboriginal nations throughout North America. The Winnebago, the Santee, and the Sioux of the midwest, the Cherokee and Siminoles of the southeast, the Pomo of the westcoast and the Iroquois and Algonquin of the northeast, each played their own version of lacrosse. Although there was a great deal of variation in the style of game played, each nation participated in the game as a spiritual event. Lacrosse was also played between two Indian nations when an important dispute could not be settled through discussion. Lacrosse was referred to as "Tewaarathon" by the Hotinonsonni.

In 1834, two lacrosse teams with participants from Kahnawake and Akwesasne played an exhibition game on the infield of a racetrack at Ville St. Pierre, Québec. Several years later, non-Indian players began to master the game of lacrosse and, in 1856, they formed the Montreal Lacrosse Club. On July 1, 1867, lacrosse was proclaimed the national game of Canada by an Act of Parliament. Also, in the summer of 1867, lacrosse received international recognition when eighteen lacrosse players from Kahnawake and Akwesasne performed in an exhibition game in Great Britain, Ireland and France. The Mohawks continue to compete in the game of lacrosse as a sports event rather than a spiritual event as was their tradition.

Canoeing is another sport that is favoured by the Mohawks in Kahnawake; it was their traditional means of transportation prior to European contact.

In 1971, the Onake Canoe club was formed in Kahnawake which now provides Mohawk paddlers with the opportu-

The game of lacrosse, even if it no longer takes on the spiritual aspect of days gone by, remains a popular sport among the Mohawks.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

nity to perform in national competitions, individually in the one-man canoe, or as a group in the war canoe.

Cultural centres

Each of the Mohawk communities of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne has a cultural centre which administers a museum and a library. Ancient Iroquois artifacts, such as False Faces, and handicrafts such as wampun belts can be found on display at the museums.

False Faces are carved wood masks which are utilized by the False Face society of the Hotinonsonni during spiritual ceremonies. Wampun belts were given and received at treaties of peace as seals of friendship.

The libraries contain a variety of publications on historical aspects of the Iroquois, mythology of the Iroquois, Mohawk language, and other cultural documentation considered important to each of the communities at Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne.

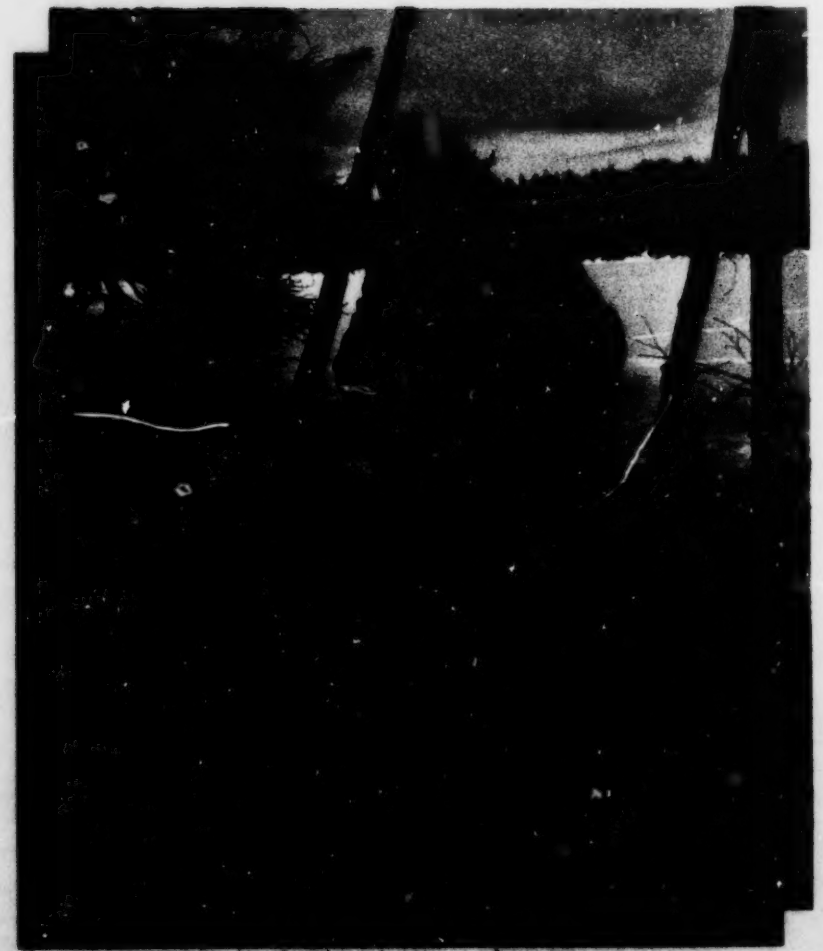
Today, more than ever, the Mohawks of Kahnawake, Kanesatake and Akwesasne are striving for their treaties of peace and friendship, such as the Two Row Wampum Treaty, to be internationally recognized.

They appear to be determined to maintain and retain control of their language and their culture through their own educational institutions and government structures.

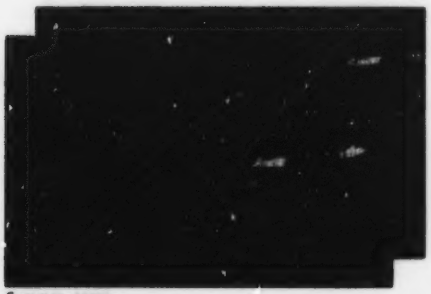
The construction of the Saint Lawrence Seaway lead to the expropriation of some 5,3 square kilometres of land on Kahnawake territory.
Photo: *André de Repentigny*

Chapter 8

The Montagnais



This young Montagnais boy from Ouiatchouan is setting up a beaver trap.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*



Summer camp.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

The Montagnais occupied an immense territory: from the Côte-Nord region it extended as far as the Saguenay River, then penetrated deep into the interior and continued towards Saint-Augustin which lies 600 kilometres northeast of Sept-Îles. Today the Montagnais still travel over this vast region in harmony with the changing seasons. Although they leave their villages for much shorter periods than in the past, the distances covered every year to go hunting in the interior are impressive.

Until mining and forestry industries were set up en masse in the 20th century, this region was occupied exclusively by the Montagnais tribes. Naturally, a few white villages had been founded early on, but they were located along the coast. The towns of Gagnon, Schefferville, Labrador City and Wabush were created later when the natural resources in the territory began to be exploited.

History

The Vikings or Norsemen were the first Europeans to set foot on North American soil, around the year 1000 A.D. In all likelihood they came to fish, as marine resources were extremely plentiful during the summer. In the 15th century the Côte-Nord region was frequented by the Inuit who came to hunt. During the same period the Montagnais met French and Basque whalers and cod-fishermen who fished every summer in the Strait of Belle Isle waters. The number of expeditions by European fishermen increased very rapidly in Labrador, the eastern part of the Côte-Nord region, and Newfoundland.

When New France was founded most of the Côte-Nord coast was offered to franchise holders or lords. In return for services rendered, the King of France accorded individuals the exclusive right to trade furs with the Montagnais and fish in the area.

The British conquest altered this state of being. The French seigniories were acquired by tradesmen who created companies enjoying an exclusive monopoly over hunting and fishing rights within their concessions. The Hudson's Bay Company, for instance, owned the trading posts located between Tadoussac and the Olomanshibou River and had claimed a monopoly over the fur trade.

The monopoly over the fur trade and fishing activities held by a few large companies during the 19th century was accompanied by forestry development as of 1840. This was first concentrated in the Haute Côte-Nord region because of the great density of coniferous forest and proximity of processing centres. Then when processes for producing paper from evergreen species were invented, the en-

tire Côte-Nord area experienced a period of mass forestry development.

With the settling of the Saint Lawrence Valley, the Montagnais had to leave their former territories to take refuge further north. This migration was only a temporary solution; from 1840 on the Saguenay region also became a colonized zone. The Montagnais then had to leave the Tadoussac, Chicoutimi and Metabetchouan trading posts to relocate to villages created by the federal government. The communities of Ouiachouan (Pointe-Bleue), Les Escoumins and Betsiamites were founded during the second half of the 19th century.

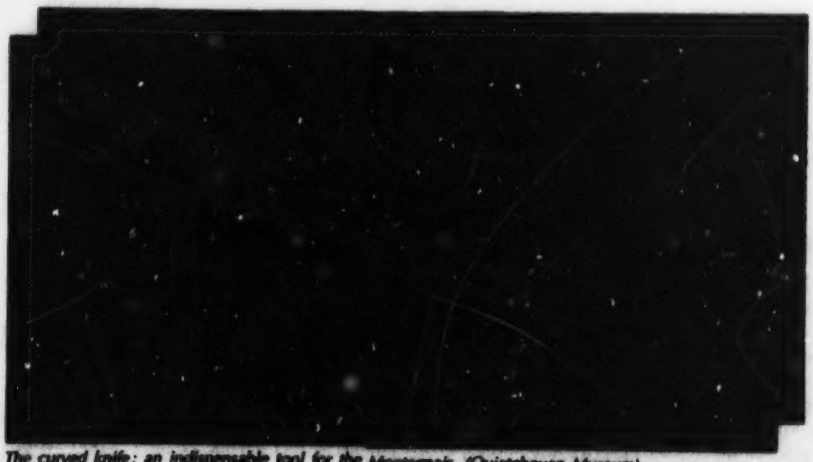
Another episode in the history of the Côte-Nord region was the area of mining development, especially iron ore, which was followed by the construction of hydroelectric dams. This period, which lasted from the beginning of the century to the early 1970s, coincided with the founding of Montagnais villages in the Moyenne and Basse Côte-Nord regions: Sept-Îles/Maliotenam, Mingan, Natashquan, La Romaine and Saint-Augustin.

The Montagnais tell their own story

Several accounts from the Montagnais oral tradition have given us information about the significant events which punctuated the chronology of Montagnais history.

Montagnais historical tales recount the establishing of Inuit communities at the mouth of rivers flowing into the gulf. This Inuit migration into Montagnais territories occasioned a good number of skirmishes. It is believed that the Inuit permanently withdrew into the hinterland in 1760.

Montagnais historical accounts also relate in detail the effects of the arrival of Europeans on the Côte-Nord coast. Until the end of the 16th century, the latter contented themselves with fishing in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. They landed only rarely to lay in a supply of drinking



The curved knife: an indispensable tool for the Montagnais. (Ouiatchouan Museum)
Photo: Serge Jauvin

water or trade with the Montagnais and Inuit, and left every fall.

However, everything changed from the 17th century on. The trading post at Tadoussac was created in 1600 and the Côte-Nord territory bounded by Hamilton Cove and Portneuf was divided into seigniories where franchise holders had exclusive trading rights. According to the Montagnais, an agreement was concluded by the Amerindians and French regarding the modes of occupying the Montagnais lands. They say the French promised to plant wheat in order to produce flour, thus protecting the Montagnais of the time and the generations yet to come from famine.

In return the Montagnais are said to have agreed to yield part of their territory to the Europeans, believing they could continue hunting in the interior and in accordance with the agreement Montagnais and Europeans owned their respective territories. The French promise to supply the Montagnais with flour would explain why the latter speak of pre-flour and post-flour periods in their stories.

The Montagnais' traditional way of live was altered considerably when flour was introduced into their daily food supply. At the same time trading posts were appearing and tradesmen began to exchange lard, tea, sugar, butter, cloth and weapons for pelts.

During the pre-flour period the Montagnais lived in the forest and did not have to travel great distances to hunt the game they consumed. In fact, although the Montagnais resided in the forest, their natural environment was near the coast, which was not without distinguishing their food supply: fish, beaver, porcupine and waterfowl. The Montagnais also hunted seal and thus laid in reserves of fat.

The Montagnais scrupulously used all resources from animals and the forest. Skin, bark, wood and bone were favoured materials for making clothing, containers, weapons, implements and means of transportation — canoes and snowshoes, for instance. Similarly, tents were made of pieces of bark; today this material has been abandoned in favour of canvas.

With the entry of the Hudson's Bay Company on the fur market and the increased presence of Oblate missionaries, Montagnais economic activities turned more and more towards trapping. Trading posts and missions were established at Sept-Îles, Nabisipi, Natashquan and Musquaro. Every spring the Montagnais migrated from the interior where they had hunted all winter to sell the skins they had collected to the various trading posts set up along the coast. Hudson's Bay Company stores adopted a "credit system" policy with respect to the native people. In exchange for their pelts the Montagnais received lard, flour, tea and weapons.

The lives of Montagnais trappers in the last century were punctuated by the seasons. At the end of the winter multi-family groups which had dispersed throughout hunting and trapping territories gathered upstream of rivers. After the thaw they moved downstream towards the coast and celebrated their reunion with great festivities. Families then returned to the trading post where they met the members of other communities who had followed nearby rivers down to the coast. It was a period not only for performing marriages and baptisms, but also for exchanging pelts and acquiring essential food supplies for their next trip. About mid-July the Montagnais left the trading posts and broke up into small groups which travelled up the rivers towards the interior.

Simultaneously with the establishing of trading posts and intensifying of the fur trade, evangelists settled in the Montagnais community. The Jesuits were missionaries with the Montagnais from 1632 until the end of the 18th century. The Oblates of the Marie-Immaculée order took over from them in 1834 and rapidly became initiated to the Montagnais language. Furthermore, they did not hesitate to follow the Amerindians in their numerous travels, they built chapels near the Hudson's Bay Company trading posts and set up an annual mission at a fixed site.

The Oblates were succeeded by the Eudist Fathers who took over from 1903 until the end of the 1940s. Since then the Oblates have once again become the Montagnais' missionaries. They live with the latter on a permanent basis in the parishes of Mingan, Natashquan and La Romaine.

Material culture

The Montagnais always knew how to adapt the game they hunted to a number of uses. Caribou was a favourite animal as it supplied most of their food resources; its fur was also used for making clothing. In the past caribou was hunted with spears, but since then guns have become the commonly used weapon. The most fruitful hunting periods were in September and October when large caribou herds formed.

Although very important, caribou was not the only food resource available. Smaller game was also hunted: duck, goose, hare, rabbit, beaver and grouse. The Montagnais fished for salmon, trout and carp, using both line and net.

Carefully decorated coats, moccasins and mittens were made from caribou hides. The Montagnais made tools for scraping or cleaning the skins of slain animals out of the bones.

Montagnais women formerly wore dresses and skirts made from unshorn caribou skins. During the winter they wore red or black cloth tunics which went from the chin down to the knees. Coloured leg-

Everyday scene in Natashquan.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

gings completed their dress. All their clothing was beautifully decorated. The pelts were dyed with natural colourings, strewn with rows of pearls and decorated with pendants and multicoloured tassels. Today Montagnais women still wear very original hats.

The Montagnais also made implements, bags and containers which served as household equipment. For instance, oval wooden containers were used for drinking or carrying water, spruce bark baskets were used for storing fruit, and caribou skin bags were used for carrying furs, clothing or anything bulky. Wooden spoons and ladles were used for cooking.

From generation to generation, the Montagnais handed down the techniques for making their traditional articles. Today they still make several types of snowshoes which differ from one another by the shape of their wooden frames and the number of crosspieces. Birch is considered the most suitable wood, but spruce and larch are frequently used.

To make snowshoes, canoes and various implements, the Montagnais make great use of the curved knife. The blade of this essential tool has a curved cutting side and a straight blunt side. To plane wood the user must hold the instrument perpendicularly in his hand and draw it towards him.

Montagnais culture attributes a significant role to toys and musical instruments. They make a cup-and-ball game with a very pointed caribou bone to which a series of superimposed cones are attached with a leather cord. A marten or mink tail is fastened to the tip of this series of cones which are actually the smallest toebones of the caribou. The player must hold the pointed tip of the cup-and-ball game and, throwing bones into the air, try to catch the closest one on the tip. They also make rattles with wooden hoops covered with a wood frame and containing pebbles, as well as superb dolls wearing clothing peculiar to the Montagnais culture. Drums are of paramount importance for the Montagnais as they accompany all events, both sacred and secular. They are made out of spruce wood and caribou skin.

Mythology

The oral tradition preserved the memory of the Montagnais people's facts and acts with respect to both legends presenting heroic personalities (animals, humans or gods) and anecdotes recounting their daily lives (first European contacts, arrival of the missionaries, colonization of the Côte-Nord region...).

All in all, the storyteller in the Montagnais oral tradition is the equivalent of the historian and writer in western societies which favour writing. He embodies the identity of the Amerindian community through the tales of which he is the guardian.

Moreover, the Montagnais are conscious of the various socio-cultural functions which the oral tradition comprises. They actually make a distinction between *atanukan* and *tipatshimun*. The former are considered mythical tales or legends. They tell the story of the origin of the world and the Indian territory, the creation of social and religious rules. The tipatshimun deal mainly with events experienced by the Montagnais people and are usually based on visual accounts for certain facts.

Two personalities play an important role in the tales making up the Montagnais oral literature: Carcajou the Wolverine and Tshakapesh. Carcajou is essentially a comic hero. He is an animal distinguished by his fundamental ambiguity, since he infringes upon or ignores the cultural dictates of Montagnais society. He is both a beneficient and an evil hero. It can be

Child from La Romaine.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

said that Carcajou founds the rules of Amerindian culture by making mistakes and playing the fool. Carcajou can therefore be imagined as a clown whose speech or impertinent actions threaten the integrity of Amerindian society, but also consolidate it in as much as the destabilizing nature of his deeds and acts ensures the supremacy of Amerindian culture.

Tshakapesh is also a key figure in Montagnais mythology. Like Carcajou the Wolverine, he is actually a civilizing hero, but unlike the latter, Tshakapesh is distinguished by his essentially altruistic behaviour. He kills monsters and cannibals which threaten the Amerindians' existence. He is thought of as a protective personality who ensures the survival of the Montagnais community.

The Villages

Ouiatchouan (Pointe-Bleue)

The Montagnais village of Ouiatchouan is located three kilometres north of Roberval and has a population of 1 500. It has existed since 1851.

Ouiatchouan is located on the western shore of Lac St-Jean. Its geographical position and accessibility by Highway 169, once Laurentides Park is crossed, make it a village frequented by tourists.

Many people are attracted throughout the summer season by two camping grounds with access to the lake located at the east and west ends of the village, as well as by two important events: the international crossing of Lac St-Jean and the village's annual festivities. Ouiatchouan has several handicrafts shops open all year round where people can buy leather clothing, bark baskets for various purposes, jewellery, etc.

Les Escoumins

The village of Les Escoumins lies 40 kilometres northeast of Tadoussac on the north bank of the Saint Lawrence River. It has a population of 150. Belonging to the Haute Côte-Nord region, it is accessible by Highway 138.

Tree felling and seal hunting are among the important economic activities.

Betsiamites

This is the largest Montagnais village, with a population of over 2 000. Its founding dates back to 1861. Located on the Haute Côte-Nord and lying 60 kilometres southwest of Baie-Comeau, it can be reached by car via Highway 138.

Jobs are available through the Band Council in tree felling and commercial businesses. Traditional subsistence activities such as salmon fishing, moose hunting and beaver trapping remain an important source of income in terms of both economics and the food supply.

In the sphere of education a local takeover can be noted. Since 1982 Montagnais spelling has been standardized, making it easier to develop teaching material. At present full elementary school education is given at Betsiamites. A high school of an intercultural nature is scheduled to open in January 1985. Montagnais culture and the Montagnais language as mother tongue will be taught. French will be taught as a second language, and students will be able to acquire elements of Québec culture in addition to all subjects regularly offered in the high school programme.

Matimekosh

Founded in 1960, this village is located near Schefferville in Nouveau-Québec. It has a population of 500. The village is rather inaccessible, and the only way to get there is by plane. The Montagnais of

Matimekosh are related to those of the Côte-Nord region, and especially the people of Sept-Îles.

The village has an active handicrafts centre. Traditional subsistence activities still produce an important food supply and simultaneously ensure an income through the fur trade.

Until 1983 the Montagnais shared the area bounding their village with the Naskapis, but since the new village of Kawawachikamach was created, the Naskapis have moved into their new houses which are about 15 kilometres away.

Sept-Îles/Maliotenam

The village of Maliotenam lies 16 kilometres from Sept-Îles; it was created in 1949, whereas Sept-Îles was founded in 1906. It consists of one Indian Band with over 1 600 members. Today the Montagnais who have been living in the centre of Sept-Îles since 1906 receive the same services as the non-aboriginals of this town. Band Council offices are set up at Maliotenam.

In Sept-Îles there is a translation firm called "Traduction Montagnaise Sept-Îles Enr.". It deals with the translation of articles, reports, symposia and books from French to Montagnais and does research on the standardization of Montagnais writing. The main objective of this work is to make it easier to prepare technical material.

In the cultural field, "Carcajou", a troupe of internationally known dancers, passes on various aspects of the traditional way of life and Montagnais religious beliefs through the dances of the bear, eagle and others.

In this part of the Côte-Nord region, the main economic activities are based on forestry, trapping and handicrafts.

Mingan

The village of Mingan is some 40 kilometres west of Hâvre-Saint-Pierre on the Moyenne Côte-Nord of the Saint Lawrence River. The Montagnais have been living there since 1963 and comprise a population of 323. This is the last

Joachim Capeau playing the drum in Betsiamites.
Photo: *Serge Jouvin*

Montagnais village accessible by road: one can reach it by car via Highway 136 which goes as far as Hâvre-Saint-Pierre.

Mingan has a plant called « Les Crustacés de Mingan Inc. » (Mingan Seafood Inc.), owned by the Band Council and the only factory of its type in Québec and Canada belonging to the Amerindians. It employs a number of Montagnais workers, usually on a six-month basis. Another firm, a tannery, has both male and female employees.

Hunting and fishing activities generally remain significant. The catch is diversified: moose and caribou are hunted in the north, while beaver, muskrat and marten are important and prized for their furs. Salmon, sea trout and shellfish add some variety to the food supply.

The Mingan chapel is especially interesting because of the religious sculptures decorating its interior. In addition, handicraft activities are dynamic and the development of a camping ground makes it pleasant for tourists to stay there.

It is impossible to speak of Mingan without mentioning its archipelago. This is an impressive site, both by its fauna and flora and its geological formations. Access is possible by sea, on board either a cruising ship or a small boat with a guide's services, or by hydroplane. Concerned about the protection of their environment, the Montagnais take an interest in preserving the archipelago and have devoted an entire legacy of toponyms (place names) to this region.

Natashquan

Located on the Basse Côte-Nord, the village lies 350 kilometres east of Sept-Îles. It has been occupied since 1952 and has a population of 439. There are no roads leading there; the only means of access are by plane and boat.

The children do their first years of elementary school in the village and then continue their studies in the non-aboriginal school of Natashquan.

From generation through generation the Montagnais have transmitted the techniques for manufacturing the objects that surround them. Today, they still make various types of snowshoes.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

Several committees take an active interest in the fields of recreation, handicrafts, hunting and community radio.

La Romaine

This village is 400 kilometres northeast of Sept-Îles and is part of the Basse Côte-Nord region. Its 690 residents have occupied the village since 1949. The only ways to reach it are by hydroplane or boat.

The economy is based on hunting and fishing activities. A hunting committee takes care of selling furs. Other committees deal with the issues of schooling health and community radio.

The primary local handicraft products are canoes, snowshoes and moccasins.

Saint-Augustin

The village of Saint-Augustin is the smallest of the nine Montagnais villages in Québec; its 139 residents occupy about 20 houses. There is a distance of 600 kilometres between Sept-Îles and Saint-Augustin.

Like the other two villages of the Basse Côte Nord region, access is difficult but made possible by plane and boat.

Hunting, fishing and trapping products are the population's main food source.

Political organization

The Conseil attikamek-montagnais (CAM)

In 1975, the Montagnais and Attikamek villages set up the Conseil attikamek — montagnais (CAM), which was given the task of defending and protecting Attikamek and Montagnais interests.

Since then it has taken charge of asserting the rights of these nations vis-à-vis the governments. Since 1980 it has therefore been engaged in three-party negotiations with the Canadian and Québec governments to have its territorial rights and the

Moose - skin slippers. (Ouiatchouan)
Photo: Serge Jauvin

right to political autonomy recognized. The CAM has a social, economic and cultural mission.

The Band Council

The Band Council is the basic political organization in each village. Made up of a Chief and a council chosen by way of elections, it administers services similar to those of a municipality and represents its community with respect to the various levels of government.

The Band Council thus runs the community and sees to the application of various government programmes. In the past few years some Band Councils have taken over the spheres of education, local government and economic development.

Education

Education is a field considered to be a priority by the Montagnais who intend to establish a pedagogical system respecting the Montagnais language and cultural community, while simultaneously promoting a knowledge of the Québec environment.

At the end of the 1970s several Montagnais communities, including Sept-Îles/Maliotenam, Betsiamites and Ouiatchouan, decided to take full charge of the administration of their educational system. This involved the control of expenses, formerly managed by the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the formation of a Board of Governors made up of Montagnais, most of them parents from the community. The takeover of the educational field was distinguished by an increase in the number of Montagnais instructors; the proportion of Amerindian teachers is now between 35 and 50 percent in these three communities. Finally, the Montagnais had to standardize a Montagnais language education programme in order to produce technical material.

Simultaneously with these achievements, in January 1983 the Montagnais of Betsiamites created the Centre de développement du programme d'enseignement Montagnais. This organization has the task of developing educational methods based on the Montagnais cultural background. Finally, it should be noted that the objectives of the amerindianization programme apply mainly to the elementary and secondary levels. The Montagnais have to leave their communities if they wish to pursue college and university studies; most of them go to the CEGEP in Jonquière, Université du Québec in Chicoutimi and Université Laval in Québec.

Institut éducatif et culturel des Attikameks et des Montagnais (IECAM)

The IECAM (Attikamek and Montagnais Educational and Cultural Institution) is a non-profit corporation with the mandate to develop the educational sector and promote the cultural sector. It is an autonomous organization which has existed since 1978. One of its main purposes is to improve the development of amerindianization programmes in the Montagnais community, in terms of training teachers, teaching the language and determining pedagogical content. Intended for the Attikamek and Montagnais communities, the IECAM assesses the priorities and needs of each village in the cultural and educational spheres.

The IECAM is also attempting to develop permanent communication links with the other Amerindian communities in Québec and the national native people associations in the fields of education and culture. Thus a committee uniting representatives of the Attikamek and Montagnais communities regularly informs the Québec government about aboriginal policies in the educational sector.

Health

The Montagnais can obtain first-line medical services in their communities which all have clinics coming for the most part under Health and Welfare Canada. The staff of these clinics usually consists of two nurses and, sometimes, aboriginal assistants. For more specialized medical care, the Montagnais receive the visits of specialists in their villages; they can also go to hospitals located in the neighbouring municipalities.

In 1982 health administration among the Attikamek and Montagnais was the issue of an extensive study by the Conseil attikamek-montagnais. Approximately 40 recommendations were formulated, including an increased training of medical staff and a return to traditional medicine based on plants.

Community health and prevention were also among the major concerns of Montagnais and Attikamek communities which set up Projet Caribou. Since 1976 this community action and public awareness programme has aimed at checking the abuse of alcohol. Each village directly manages its budget.

Communications

Community radio

The first Montagnais community radio stations were created in 1979 in Natashquan and La Romaine, followed by Mingan and Saint-Augustin in 1980. By helping these four communities to equip themselves with a modern means of communication, Québec intended to support their efforts at breaking their isolation barrier. The stations set themselves the mandate to broadcast news of a cultural, social and political nature, offer local viewpoints putting the life of each community in perspective, and provide an overall view of the situation of aboriginal nations in Québec and Canada.

Today the nine Montagnais villages have their own community radio stations and are linked to a network whose production centre is in Village-des-Hurons, near

This woman from La Romaine is preparing "la banique", unleavened bread baked in sand.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

Québec City. A team of young Amerindian reporters produces a number of programmes which are recorded on tape and then directed towards the communities. Since July 1982 the production centre has been able to broadcast its programmes directly to the communities. This is done daily on short wave between 10:00 a.m. and noon.

Another important aspect of communications for the Montagnais is the use of a high-frequency radio system commonly called "hunters' radio". This network is multi-purpose: among other things, hunters who are sick or hurt can be reached, contact can be made with families during prolonged periods of absence in the forest, and hunters can be informed about fluctuations in the fur market.

Tepatshimuwin — The Montagnais newspaper

The word Tepatshimuwin means "the message". Founded in 1978, the periodical is circulated throughout the Montagnais communities as well as elsewhere. It interest not only the Amerindian community, but also such people as academics and civil servants. With the introduction of community radio it slackened somewhat, but there are plans to start it up again in 1984.

Documentation centre

The documentation centre in the Conseil attikamek-montagnais offices is connected with the Institut éducatif et culturel des Attikameks and des Montagnais. It houses a whole series of documents, photos illustrating various subjects, and sound tracks on which songs, legends and stories passed on by oral tradition by the Elders are recorded. In addition, a number of research reports, theses and books complete the data bank.

Cultural activities

Montagnais cultural life is very much alive and rich in events and traditions. It is distinguished by the variety and number of means used to hand down knowledge peculiar to the nation.

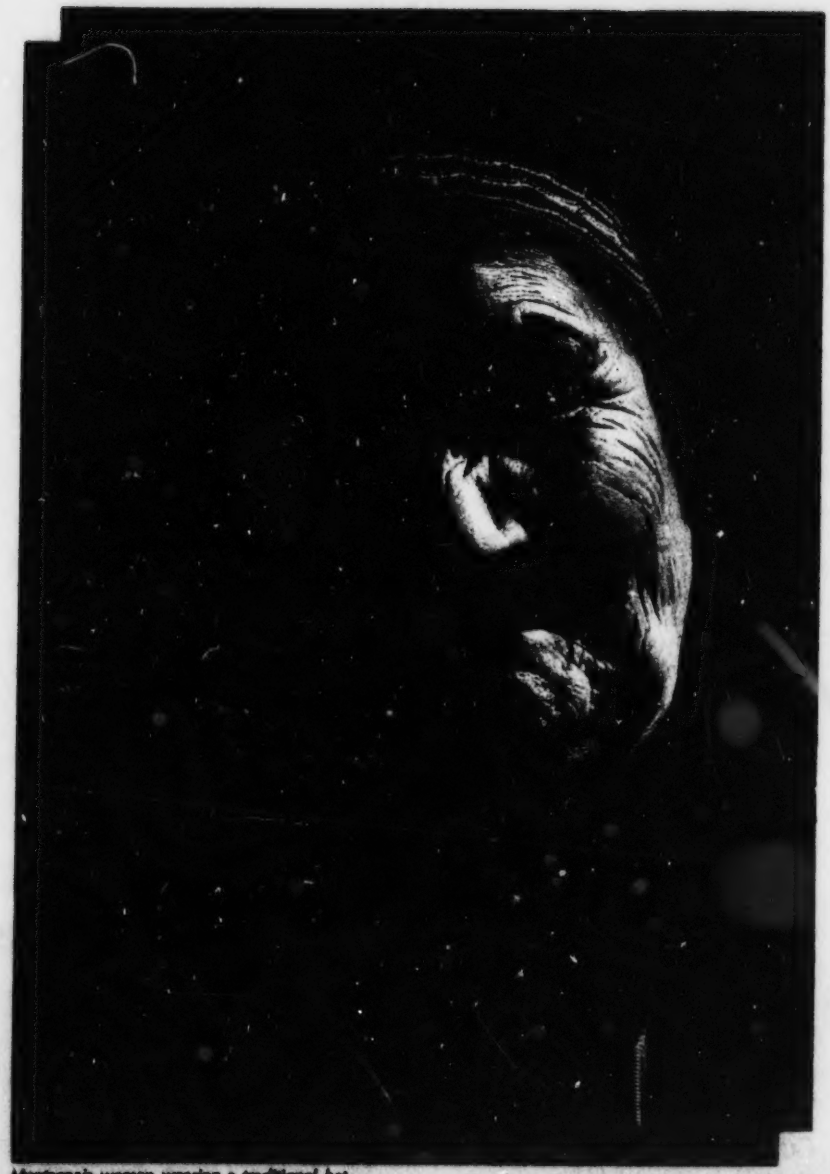
The Elders play an important role in passing on the Montagnais culture, both in the village and on seasonal camping sites. In the village, the Elders are invited to the school where the stories they tell are respectfully and avidly listened to by the children. In addition, they often preside over official ceremonies which usually end with the "Makusham" dance, a traditional Montagnais dance which is performed to the sound of drums accompanied by songs.

In the seasonal camps the Elders revive the traditional way of life. While simultaneously practising subsistence activities such as hunting and trapping, the younger people are introduced to the rudiments of their culture: language, genealogy, toponymy, history of their nation and spiritual life. They also learn how to survive in the forest.

In the past few years Montagnais culture has also been largely conveyed by its singers, dancers, painters and writers. Singing makes it easier to pass on stories, dancing is somewhat of a ritual, painting and writing make the features and customs of a people's life timeless.

The museums of Ouiatchouan and Sept-Îles

The museum of the Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Ouiatchouan has existed since 1977. Its objectives are numerous: to encourage the knowledge of Montagnais history; preserve artifacts adequately; collect, study and exhibit articles reflecting Montagnais history; preserve the Amerindian heritage; and stimulate archeological research. On July 2, 1983 the Amerindian museum of Pointe-Bleue left the former Oblate presbytery and moved into an ultra-modern building which fully meets the most stringent demands of artifact preservation.



Montagnais woman wearing a traditional hat.
Photo: *Serge Jauvin*

Opened in 1976, the Sept-Îles museum is located on the Montagnais reserve of Sept-Îles and occupies the site of the former trading post. Its objectives are to present archeological and ethnological artefacts which are representative of the Montagnais material culture. In its permanent exhibition hall visitors can view archeological pieces gathered during excavations on the site of the old trading post and articles bearing witness to the Montagnais-Naskapi culture. As in Ouiatchouan, the presentation of artefacts is often accompanied with demonstrations by Montagnais craftsmen who work on location, using typical materials and various objects derived from their traditional culture.

The Montagnais nation has also been portrayed through several audio-visual productions, photography, slide shows, movies, painting and sculpture by non-aboriginal artists.

Chapter 9

The Naskapis

Nonna Einish is one of the Naskapi women who actively participated in the construction of their new village.
Photo: Warren Lipton

Kawawachikamach.
Photo: *Ann Picard*

The 400 Québec Naskapis live in the Schefferville area. Related to the Crees and Montagnais, and speaking a very similar language, they belong to the Algonquian linguistic family.

Overall survey and history

Throughout history, the term « Naskapi » was used to designate various Cree and Montagnais Amerindian groups, before it referred to those who are known by this name today. A derivative of the 17th century Montagnais word *unaskahpiwaky*, the term « Naskapi » was to take on a pejorative connotation for European missionaries and merchants which has nothing to do with its original meaning, an approximation of the following: « people from the place where things disappear ». Thus, those called Naskapis are Amerindians considered by European criteria to be less civilized, having been relatively little in contact with the religion, culture or economy of white people. The name « Naskapi » was finally to refer to the people from the interior Ungava region who had later contacts with Europeans. These were the ancestors of the present-day Schefferville Naskapis, and some authors have claimed that they originally belonged to the Cree nation.

Before the Europeans arrived in the Ungava, Naskapi life was based mainly on hunting caribou, which were particularly numerous in the Ungava Bay area. The caribou satisfied almost all their needs, for food, clothing and other useful items. Fish and a few small animals rounded out their diet. The Naskapis lived in small family groups and travelled freely over great distances, following the caribou migration routes. Once a year large numbers gathered where fish and caribou were plentiful. These meetings offered an opportunity for exchanging goods and information and for great festivities.

Although no trading posts were set up in the Naskapi territory until 1830, the Naskapis were able to either obtain European goods very early through their Montagnais or Cree neighbours or to frequent those posts which were already open in the James Bay or North Shore region to trade their furs. Around 1819 the Hudson's Bay Company began to open posts in the Québec-Labrador peninsula to counter competing traders, such as the Moravians in Labrador, the Northwest Company or independent dealers from Québec City or Montréal. But it was not until 1830 that a trading post was established in Old Fort Chimo, at the mouth of the Koksoak River. The decline in the James Bay beaver population between 1810 and 1830, the exceptional quality of furs from the Ungava, especially marten, and the hope of establishing commercial ties with the Inuit, constituted a strong incentive for the Hudson's Bay

authorities to locate near the Naskapi territory, even though the Naskapis themselves seemed to be more inclined to hunt caribou than fur-bearing animals.

In 1938 the Hudson's Bay Company opened two new trading posts, this time in the heart of Naskapi hunting grounds, those of Fort Nascopie, on Lac Petitsikapau, and Fort Trial, on Lac de la Hutte Sauvage (Mushuau Nipi). A post had also been set up at Eskimo Bay (today Northwest River) in Labrador to compete with the independent Labrador posts which sometimes attracted the Naskapis. The discovery of a possible supply route by land between the Eskimo Bay and Fort Nascopie trading posts resulted in Old Fort Chimo being closed down from 1842 until 1866.

With time, the Hudson's Bay Company was able to « attach » the Naskapis to the post at Fort Nascopie, until it was decided in 1870 that trading activities should once again be transferred to Old Fort Chimo, since supplying Fort Nascopie had proven more difficult and costly than expected. However, at the turn of the century, caribou having become scarce around Old Fort Chimo, it was decided that a new post should be set up within the Naskapi territory, that of Fort Mackenzie, at the northeast corner of Lac Lemoyne, very close to where the Caniapiscau and Swampy rivers merge. A few families who hunted in the vicinity of the Whale and George rivers nevertheless continued to frequent Old Fort Chimo. Fort Mackenzie was also in a position to serve Crees visiting the area and Montagnais from Sept-Îles, but the latter would never have gone as far as Old Fort Chimo.

Few major events were reported about Fort Mackenzie up to its final closing in 1948. However, a couple are worthy of note: the landing of the first airplane in 1938, and in 1942 the setting up of a meteorological station for Transport Canada. In 1948 the Naskapis were once again « tied » to Old Fort Chimo until they left for Schefferville in 1956.

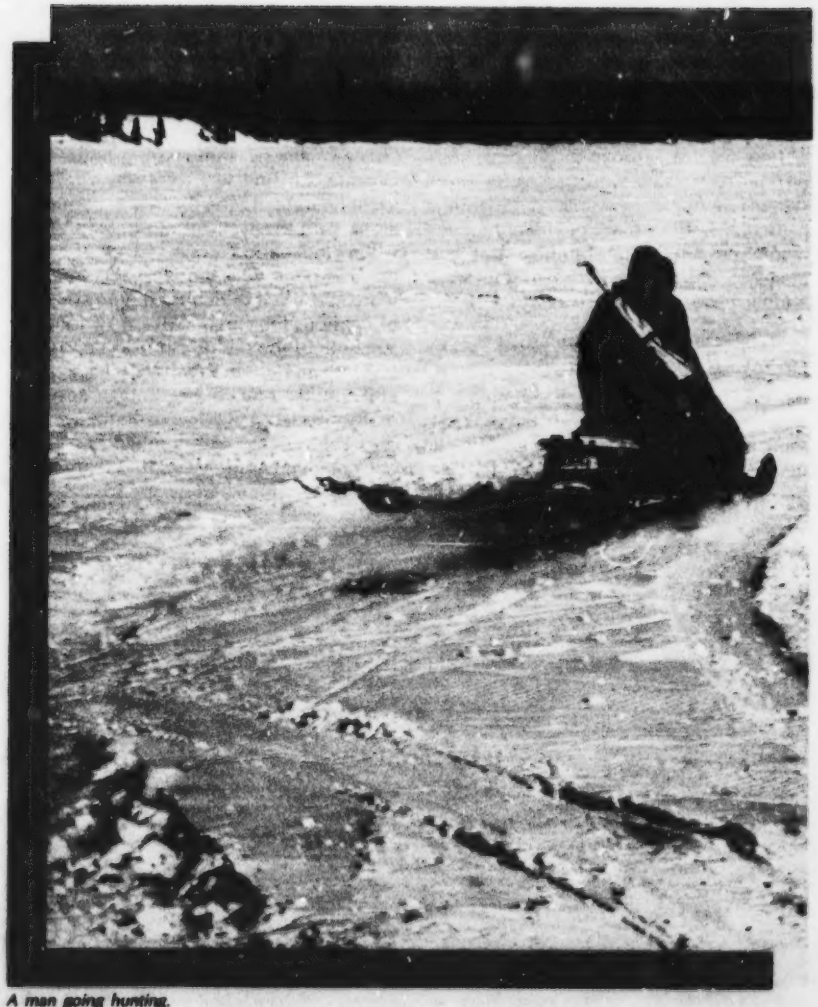
It was only with difficulty that the fur trade was established with the Naskapi

Naskapis students and teacher in Schefferville.
Photo: Warren Lipton

nation. The caribou made them self-sufficient, and it was therefore not in their interest to give up their traditional hunt, which had always enabled them to survive, for the trapping of small fur-bearing animals which would never give them enough to live on. However, the Naskapis finally followed the example of their Cree and Montagnais neighbours who had already been integrated into the fur trade network. Once its monopoly over the fur trade was established, the Hudson's Bay Company succeeded in attaching the Naskapis to the trading posts on their territories, because of its credit system: a hunter got into debt with a particular trading post for his equipment before he left to go hunting and was therefore obliged to return to the same trading post to exchange his furs.

The Naskapi way of life changed as they became more and more dependent on the trading posts. The « attachment » of Amerindian hunters to the trading posts seems to have had consequences on the frequenting of the territory and the relationship among the various groups. The importance of the information network existing among the various Amerindian groups on the success of hunting must be emphasized here. It seems that because of their belated interest in trading with white men, the Naskapis were gradually cut off from other groups already involved in the fur trade with the James Bay and St. Lawrence posts. Later, when they too became « attached » to trading posts, they found themselves artificially divided into sub-groups, depending on the particular post they belonged to. The exchanges among these sub-groups then became less and less frequent. The time spent on trapping the fur-bearing animals, along with the lack of information about where the caribou herds were located, might explain why the Naskapis found it more and more difficult to lay in supplies of caribou, their main source of food. A page out of the period's history reports of several famines among the Naskapis from 1893 on, their health becoming more and more affected by this changing way of life. With time, the number of skillful hunters decreased as well, creating an imbalance within family groups.

Student in Schefferville. He soon will be able to take advantage of the new school opening in Kawawachikamach.
Photo: *Warren Lipton*



A man going hunting.
Photo: Warren Lipton

In 1949, the federal government began to show some concern about the fate of the Naskapis at Old Fort Chimo, and helped them by providing food rations and health care.

In 1956, when the Naskapis received the offer to move to Schefferville, they agreed, hoping their living conditions would improve. But it was only recently, with the signing of the Northeastern Québec Agreement in 1978, that the Naskapis were really able to take their future into their own hands, particularly by choosing to build their own village of Kawawachikamach on the banks of Lac Matemaco, some 16 kilometres from Schefferville.

Achievements

Political and administrative structures

The main Naskapi political organization is the *Band Council* which is elected by the people and performs the role of local government, establishing its policies and priorities after consulting the population.

The Northeastern Québec Agreement led to the creation of various organizations, committees and corporations, the main one being the Naskapi Development Corporation which has a mandate to receive and administer the compensation granted after the Agreement was signed. It also participates in several socioeconomic and educational programmes which call upon the funds received.

According to the new Naskapi land system, the village of Kawawachikamach territory, i.e. lands of category I A-N, is under Band Council responsibility, while lands of category I B-N come under the jurisdiction of the Corporation of the Naskapi Village of Schefferville and belong to the Naskapi Landholding Corporation.

Education

For the past few years the Naskapis have put a good deal of effort into education, key to their future. Moreover, they have invested as much in adult education and occupational training as in regular schooling, both elementary and secondary.

The Naskapi community is able to get involved in the educational system through the *Naskapi Educational Committee* which works in cooperation with the Ministère de l'Éducation, the school board, the school and the Band Council. The Committee, which was established under the Northeastern Québec Agreement, consists of five members, four of them elected by the population. It acts as the school committee within the Eastern Québec School Board which Kawawachikamach comes under, and it looks after the development and enhancement of the Naskapi tradition, language and culture.

Aiming for an Amerindian educational system, the Naskapis foster the training of aboriginal teachers. Moreover, a few Naskapi teachers have already been appointed. The school programme provides for teaching the Naskapi language a certain number of hours per week. There are also plans to bring an introduction to traditional techniques — arts, crafts, hunting — into the school, and every year the students spend two weeks out in the wilderness with « elders » who can in this way pass on their knowledge of the Naskapi tradition.

At present, Naskapi children attend Knob Lake School. However, a new school will soon open in Kawawachikamach; it will include both elementary and high school classes, a library and an area devoted to arts, crafts and traditional techniques. In addition, the Naskapi Development Corporation will contribute financially to the

erection of a gymnasium which will be large enough to serve the whole community.

Adult education has become very important to the Naskapi people. Basic educational courses have therefore been offered to adults with little or no schooling, followed by high school level courses, giving them access to vocational courses. The basic courses are taught by Naskapi women.

Building the new village brought the need for specialized labour to the fore, and a Naskapi manpower training programme was implemented in Schefferville as of 1978. Technical courses dealing with construction jobs were offered to both Naskapi men and women.

Since 1983, young Naskapis wishing to acquire a trade have been able to undergo a period of training at the Lac Hélène Professional Training and Qualification Centre which is south of Radisson, in the James Bay territory. This centre, intended for Crees, Inuit and Naskapis, offers courses in carpentry, plumbing, electricity, mechanics, etc. The Lac Hélène centre activities are under the responsibility of the Commission de formation professionnelle de la main-d'oeuvre du Québec.

Health and social services

The health and social services offered to the Naskapis are provided by the Québec Ministère des Affaires sociales network. To ensure their needs were properly perceived and served, the Naskapis set up a *Health and Social Services Consultative Committee*, with three Naskapi members elected by the people. This committee, which was established under the Northeastern Québec Agreement, provides liaison between the Schefferville Hospital and Community Health Department, the Regional Health and Social Services Centre and the Haute-Rive Social Services Centre, and the Ministère des Affaires sociales.

In Kawawachikamach, first aid and preventive health programmes for the new

Adult education has taken on a great deal of importance for the Naskapis over the past few years. In 1980 a group of women including Kathleen Tooma took English courses.
Photo: Warren Lipton

community clinic are to be ensured by a resident nurse.

Relocation

With the signing of the Northeastern Québec Agreement, the Schefferville Naskapis were able to leave the Matimekosh reserve, which they had been sharing with the Montagnais since 1956, and build a new village. Following surveys and consultation, the Naskapi population chose to relocate its village.

Although this move is not the only one the Naskapis have undertaken in their history, it is certainly the first one they have decided upon themselves, and where they have been able to participate in all phases of the decision process — choosing the site of the future village, the development and layout plan, the type of housing, etc. A contest held among the Naskapi people led to a name for the village: *Kawawachikamach.*

The population was consulted in stages. Thus, the Naskapis first favoured the concept of detached one-family houses. It subsequently proved necessary to build about ten houses in a row to meet the needs of some members of the community, especially the young people. Then every family was able to decide upon the site of their future homes, within the framework of the planned village layout. The types of interior partitioning and finishing were also left up to them. Emphasis was placed on energy savings within the context of northern living — very well insulated houses, adequate heating system, windows mainly facing south.

Set up in April 1980, the *Naskapi Relocation Corporation* did the construction work at Kawawachikamach. Naskapis who had taken training courses in the various building trades supplied more than two thirds of the required labour.

Several Naskapi families have already moved to Kawawachikamach. Between now and 1985, as soon as the village infra-structures are completed, the rest of the population will follow.

Communications

Communications have always been part of Naskapi life; a nomadic nation travelling over huge expanses of land, it could never have survived without a well organized information network, one where the oral tradition was the main instrument.

Today community radio has taken on the role of broadcasting information and preserving the Naskapi culture and language, as it easily reaches the entire community.

Modern technology has even affected hunters who can keep in touch with their village by transmitting sets when they are away hunting.

Moreover, the new village of Kawawachikamach is now linked to the rest of Québec by a telephone line.

Economic development

Naskapi economic development has promising prospects. Although the financial contributions resulting from the signing of the Northeastern Québec Agreement have played a role, the determination of the Naskapi community to take its future into its own hands must not be forgotten; those who wished to engage in traditional activities received the necessary assistance, and certain innovations were encouraged. Thus a special emphasis was placed on human resources, the priorities being job creation and manpower training. A Naskapi woman was appointed development officer for this purpose.

The *Naskapi Manchow Toshouwin* (Naskapi Building Corporation) is the first

profit-making organization created by the Naskapis themselves. The company's main concerns are forest clearing and reforestation. It receives contracts from the Société d'énergie de la Baie-James and the Naskapi Relocation Corporation, and this has resulted in the training of skilled Naskapi lumberjacks.

Another interesting venture is worthy of note. In 1982, about fifteen Naskapi women, having first taken training courses in building, founded the first privately-owned business in the community, that of *Oko Inc.* (The Owls Inc.), which specializes in finishing the outside and inside of houses. Moreover, the members of Oko performed the finishing work on the dwellings in the village of Kawawachikamach.

A few other firms or businesses should also be mentioned, including the Handicraft Association which runs a shop across from the airport in Schefferville during the fishing and hunting season, a private bus company which carries children and employees between Schefferville and Kawawachikamach, a grocery store, etc.

Ensuring the continuity: Hunting

For centuries, the Naskapi way of life was almost wholely tied to caribou hunting, as this animal supplied practically everything they needed to survive. With time, the fur trade and settling process separated the Naskapis from their caribou-hunting grounds, making it more and more difficult to pursue traditional hunting activities.

To reverse the clock, the Northeastern Québec Agreement established a *Naskapi Hunter Support Programme*. As a result the Naskapis receive a yearly grant from Québec, enabling them to hunt and increase the supply of game for their community.

Naskapi hunting activities have now become more efficient thanks to the coordination and contribution of the Band

Jean Tooma, a Naskapi craftswoman (Schefferville).
Photo: Warren Lipton

Council in determining the most favourable hunting periods, the location of caribou herds and the distribution of game.

The Naskapi Hunter Support Programme not only enables hunters to get equipped for the hunt, but also offers young hunters the opportunity to learn hunting, fishing and trapping techniques.

It should be emphasized that for the Naskapis, hunting has always been a community activity, and the tradition has been perpetuated, as game harvested under the Naskapi Hunter Support Programme is always distributed among the Naskapi families so everyone can enjoy some of this important and much appreciated food.

The Naskapis also think of the future, even as far as their traditional activities are concerned. They have therefore taken an interest in studies on the economic aspects of harvesting the biggest caribou herd in the world, that of the George River area. Moreover, the possibility of commercial hunting is being examined, and if the project ever materializes, the Naskapis will not hesitate about getting involved.

The contribution of traditional fishing and trapping activities should not be neglected either. These, although not as important as caribou hunting, can provide an additional income and become a means of subsistence for the Naskapis.

For centuries the Naskapis lived in harmony with an extremely harsh wilderness, and learned to use it to their advantage. The contact with European civilization drastically modified their way of life. However, in the last few years the Naskapis have shown their desire to take their future into their own hands in attempting — as far as possible — to reconcile the traditional values inherited from their ancestors with modern life in Québec.

Joe Guanish and John Makoush back from fishing.
Photo: *Warren Lipton*

The Inuit

Specialists agree that the Inuit arrived in Northeastern America about 4 500 years ago. At that time, the Arctic climate was getting milder. Small groups of nomadic hunters then living in Alaska took advantage of the situation to explore new lands. The first Inuit, said to be of the Denbigh culture, rapidly spread along the whole Arctic coast as far as Greenland.

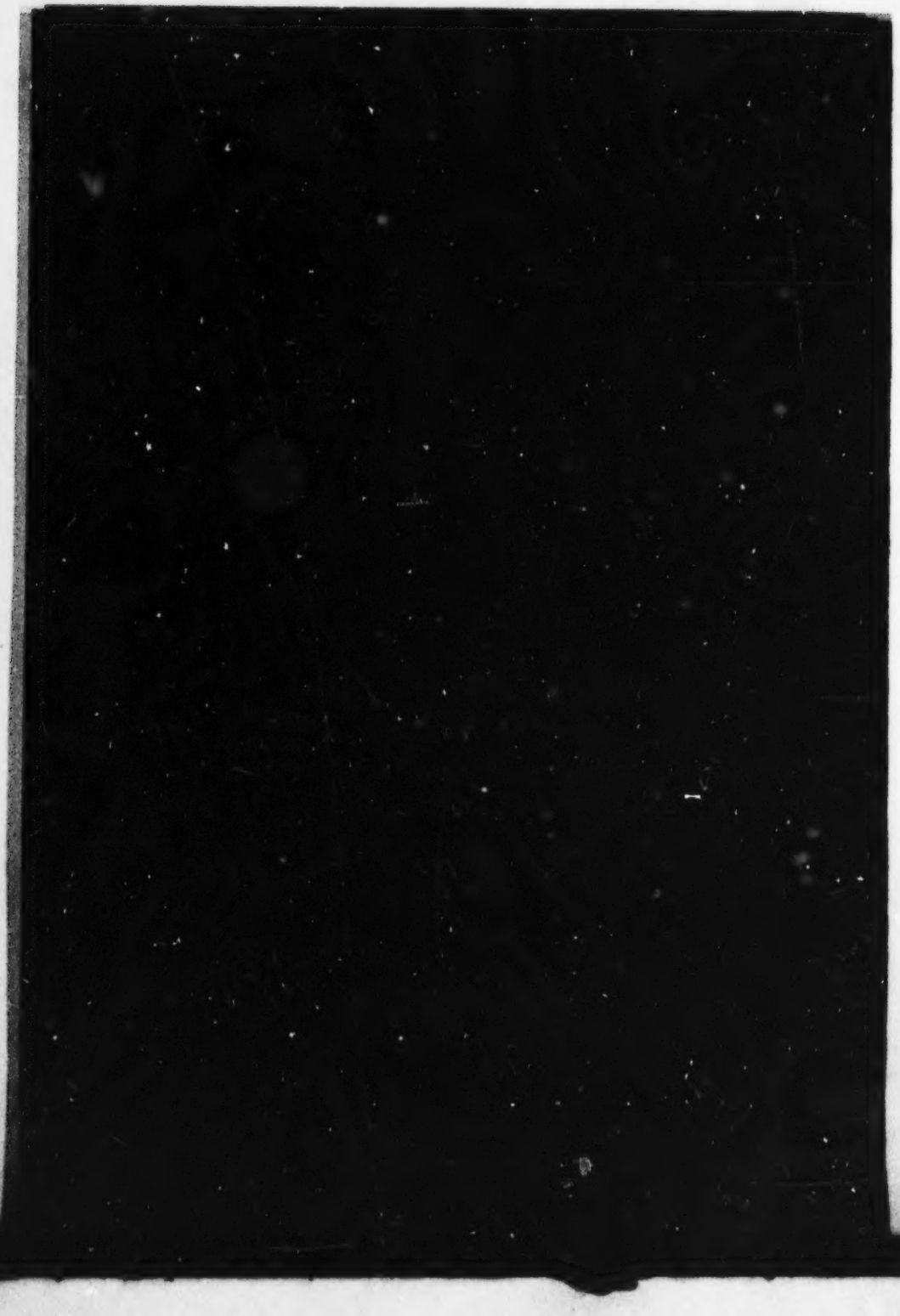
A second culture developed, most probably in the Foxe Basin. The first traces of it were found at Cape Dorset, to the south of Baffin Island. About 500 A.D., the Dorset culture Inuit pushed their migration as far as the Gulf of St. Laurence and settled along the coast of Labrador. The invention of the snow house, or igloo, has been attributed to this culture, which supplanted that of Denbigh.

Finally, around 900 A.D. a third
known as Thulé, which develo
Alaska, took over the Arctic Basin
little. Inuit legends tell the story
whale hunters took possession
Dorset people's hunting grounds.

The Thulé way of life gradually
that of the present-day Inuit. Carib
seal hunting were practised mo
more. Snow houses and tents were
ed for seasonal camping, as these
dwellings were best adapted to th
environment.

The cultural transition was probabl
pleted by the beginning of the 1
tury.

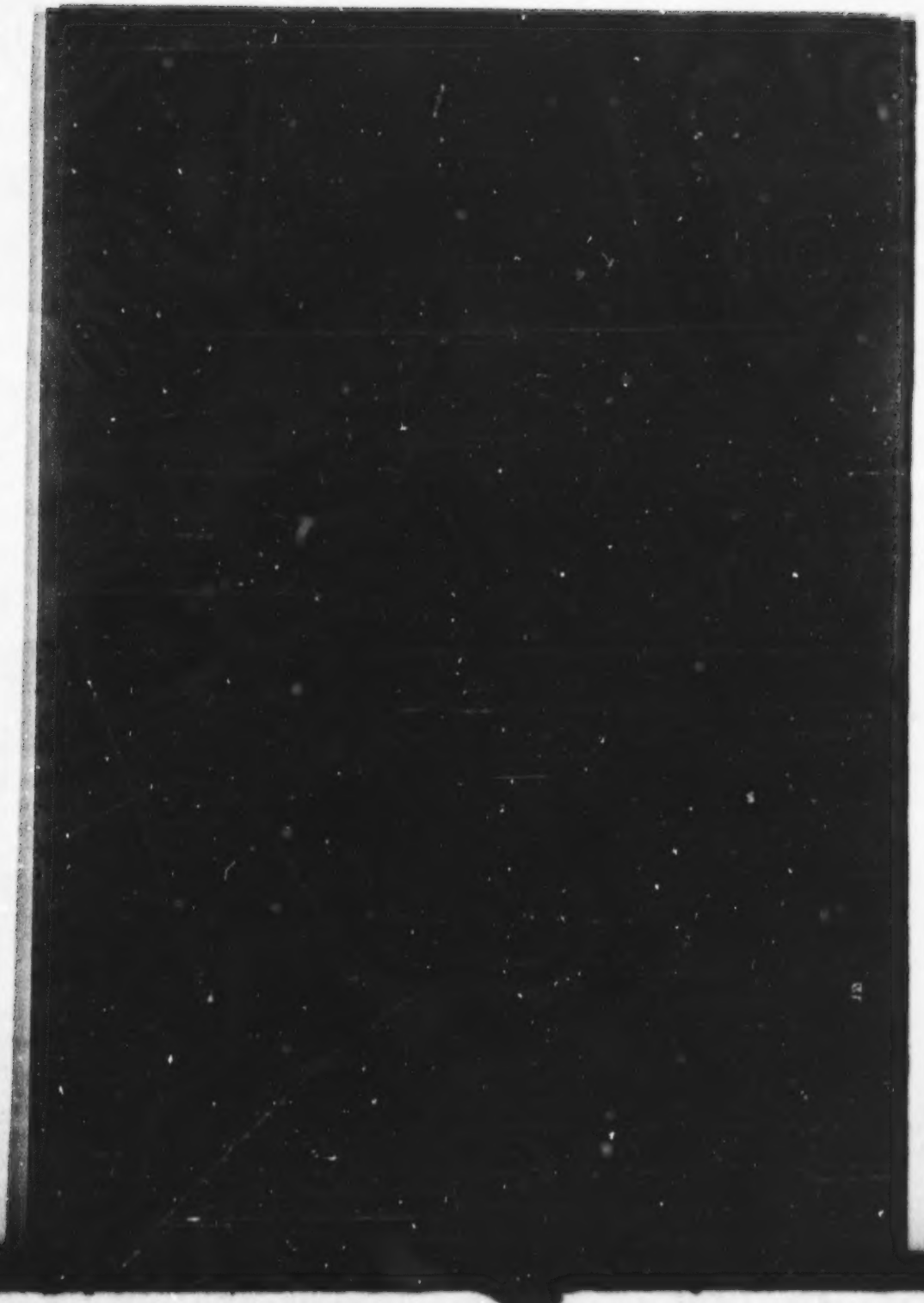
It is important to realize what the
traditions and way of life of the I
them a part as an ethnic group s
from the Amerindians.



Chapter 10

The Inuit

Using an ice pick this man is going to make a hole to draw water from the river. (Salluit)
Photo: Paul-Émile Rioux



Kuujjuarapik.
Photo: *Alain Vézina*

History

Foreign contacts

Around 1 000 AD Vikings from Scandinavia, passing first through Iceland and then Greenland, seem to have reached Baffin Island and the Ungava and left some identifiable traces in the Payne lake region. Their documents reveal that they stayed north of Newfoundland. They traded with the native people, no doubt the Inuit.

After 1400 the Inuit were probably able to deal with Europeans whose fishing boats crossed through Newfoundland waters more and more frequently. However, these were not conclusive contacts. It was at the beginning of the 17th century, in 1610, that the British navigator Henry Hudson explored the bay which bears his name today. After hearing the story of his explorations, a group of merchants formed a company to trade with the aboriginal inhabitants in the area. In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company received its charter from King Charles II of England to practise the fur trade in the Canadian Northland.

It was granted Rupert's Land which covers the entire territory drained by rivers flowing into Hudson Bay. For 200 years it operated its trading posts with hardly any competition, first with the Crees of the James Bay region, and then with the Inuit, at Kuujjuarapik (1756) and Kuujjuaq (1830). However, when Canada purchased Rupert's Land from England in 1868, the Inuit had undergone very few changes in their traditional way of life.

In 1845 American whalers began to frequent Hudson Strait. They introduced money and wooden boats to the Inuit who gradually stopped building sealskin kayaks. Similarly, the Inuit adopted rifles for hunting purposes, substituting them for harpoons. The new hunting methods made it easier to catch both marine and land animal life. Around 1915 the last whale-hunting ship made its appearance in Hudson Bay; the white whale had almost completely disappeared, and the walrus could no longer be found wherever fleets of whaling boats had established bases. The Inuit were obligled to turn to the land for survival. They experienced several years of shortage of goods to which they had become accustomed: ammunition, matches, tea...

Between 1903 and 1929 the French firm Révillon Frères came and broke up the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly by setting up posts in Kuujjuaq, Inukjuak, Kangirsuk, Kuujjuarapik, Lac Guillaume-Delisle and finally Salluit. Following financial difficulties, in 1936 the firm's

coastal posts were purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company, which had also opened trading posts in Tasiujaq, Kangiqsujuaq, Inukjuak, Quaqtaq, Salluit and near Ivujivik. Up intil 1958, with the exception of a few shortlived competitors, the Hudson's Bay Company once again enjoyed a monopoly over the trade with the Inuit.

Changes in the land

In 1898 Québec acquired part of Rupert's Land from Canada. The Abitibi region was thus added to its territory, and the northern boundary of Québec moved up to the Eastmain River. Fourteen years later, the Canadian government divided the remainder of Rupert's Land among Manitoba, Ontario and Québec. The Québec border shifted from the Eastmain River to Hudson Strait, 1 100 kilometres further north. The expansion of Québec's territory was confirmed by federal and Québec legislation in 1912, which included a clause entitling Québec to purchase the rights of the native people living in the region. At the beginning of the 1970s, these rights became the subject of negotiations which led to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

Recent history

Up until 1950 federal action in the Inuit territory was limited mainly to scientific exploration and the administration of a few government services to the Inuit. The major administrative concerns involved the military field, as evidenced by the construction of sizeable, military bases in Fort Chimo, in 1942, and Poste-de-la-Baleine in 1955.

At that time most of the Inuit were still nomadic. Their place of residence varied with the seasons. They periodically returned to the trading posts from their hunting or fishing camps along the coasts and rivers. Government action in their lives was confined to a yearly medical examination, emergency famine assistance and an irregular police patrol.

Kuujjuaq.
Photo: *Michel Gascon*

Between 1950 and 1963 the Inuit became increasingly sedentary, settling near the trading posts. This new way of life became widespread, and by 1970 most seasonal camps had been abandoned for permanent villages.

In 1963 Québec decided to offer the people of the North public services in the areas coming under its responsibility. It then created the Direction générale du Nouveau-Québec (DGNQ) with the mandate to supply government services within this unorganized territory. The DGNQ was abolished at the beginning of 1978, when the adoption of a series of Québec legislative measures resulting from the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement established and ratified the administration and political organization of the territory.

The land of the Inuit

The Inuit occupy a territory covering 563 515 square kilometres north of the 55th parallel, or approximately a third of Québec. The southern portion of this huge expanse of land is also frequented by Amerindians, Crees and Naskapis.

The some 5 650 Inuit are distributed among thirteen villages along the coastline; on the east coast of Hudson Bay: Kuujjuarapik, Inukjuak, Povungnituk, Akulivik; on the southern shores of Hudson Strait: Ivujivik, Salluit, Kangiqsujuaq, Quaqtaq; and along Ungava Bay: Kangirsuk, Aupaluk, Tasiujaq, Kuujjuaq and Kangiqsualujjuaq.

Rivers within the territory are numerous. They have provided access to the interior, thus fostering the population's survival. The southern portion coincides with a first vegetation zone, the taiga, consisting of forests with a sparse growth of black spruce and jack pine. The second zone is the so-called forest tundra with widely scattered evergreens. The third area, the northernmost, is the true tundra which is almost devoid of trees but with a rich variety of Arctic plants and flowers.

The Air Inuit garage in Kuujjuaq.
Photo: *Michel Gascon*

In each village there is a school where elementary courses and some secondary courses are given. (Tasiujaq)
Photo: Michel Gascon

Only two seasons are ever seen in this land: a very short summer with an average temperature of 10 degrees Celsius, and an exceedingly long winter in which temperatures of − 30° are not unusual. These extremely harsh climactic conditions have throughout time affected human and economic activities of the Inuit.

In the language of those who were long known as "Eskimos", the word *Inuit* means "the people" (Inuk in the singular). Linguists consider that Inuktitut is related to languages spoken from Eastern Siberia as far as Greenland. Moreover, it would seem the ancestors of the Inuit came to America via the Bering Strait.

The cooperative movement

The Inuit cooperative movement was born in 1959 when a fish and lumber cooperative was set up in Kangiqsualujjuaq, and in 1960 the Association coopérative de Povungnituk was founded to promote and market Inuit sculpture. Cooperatives rapidly took on an important role in regional business and trade. Between 1959 and 1979 the cooperative movement was extended to include all Inuit villages. The cooperatives partially freed the Inuit from the commercial domination of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1967 the cooperatives amalgamated into the Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec. Today the Fédération still coordinates activities with the purpose of supplying local stores and marketing handicrafts; it provides the necessary technical support services for the smooth operation of the eleven Inuit cooperatives which are members. The Fédération also looks after storing and distributing petroleum products in four municipalities.

In addition to operating a general store on the local level, each cooperative also administers the purchase of sculptures, handicraft items and furs. Some of them are involved in the distribution of petroleum products, food services, hotel business and outfitting. They are a combination of consumer, production, supply and service cooperatives.

The cooperative movement represents a training school and springboard for a new generation of Inuit leaders; leadership is no longer based solely on the traditional values of the nomadic life, but also on economic and political considerations of a regional nature.

The economic activity of the cooperatives totals more then 15 million dollars annually. They employ about a hundred Inuit and also enable a number of craftsmen, sculptors and engravers to make a living from their art.

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement

Administrative organization

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was signed in November 1975 and came into force in October 1977. In June 1978 this Agreement was followed by a series of laws setting up the administrative organization of Nouveau-Québec.

However, the people of Povungnituk, Ivujivik and some of those from Salluit, i.e. approximately 20 percent of the Inuit population, refused to consent to the signing of the Agreement. According to these dissidents, the Inuit representatives had no right to speak on their behalf. Not feeling bound to the Agreement these Inuit dissidents formed the Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini movement.

Among other things, the creation of the Kativik Regional Government and the Makivik Corporation and formation of landholding corporations were provided for by the Agreement.

Fresh-water supply is a municipal service. Water is often drawn from a lake or river and then distributed to home tanks by way of tank truck. (Salluit)
Photo: *Paul-Émile Rioux*

The Kativik Regional Government, which consists of regional councilors elected in each municipality, plays an administrative role on the regional level in a number of fields — health and social services, the environment, education, economic development. Its authority is territorial, not ethnic. Its leaders are elected by the entire population of the territory which is however more than 90 percent Inuit. In several cases, its representatives are appointed from within social or administrative organizations. The Kativik Regional Government holds the regulatory powers of a local municipality over the entire area which has not been organized into a municipality, and acts as such.

The Makivik Corporation and the landholding corporations are ethnic organizations to which only Inuit beneficiaries under the Agreement can belong. The role of the Makivik Corporation is to ensure that the rights of Inuit beneficiaries are protected and to administer the collective compensation granted to the Inuit by Québec and Canada under the Agreement. It takes on a major economic role, in particular with the creation of several subsidiaries: Kigiak Construction Inc., Sanak, a firm specializing in maintenance services, the Kighaq travel agency, Air Inuit Ltd., etc. The Makivik Corporation also plays a role in political, social and cultural spheres by representing the interests of its members. The landholding corporations administer the collective property of category I lands for each community in Nouveau-Québec.

Municipalities north of the 55th parallel are run by a municipal council made up of a mayor, regular councilors and a regional councilor. These councils hold the powers generally granted to any municipality in Québec. Their funding comes from the Québec Ministère des Affaires municipales and local taxation.

Municipal services include the supply of drinking water, for instance. This is often drawn from a lake or river near the village, and then delivered to household reservoirs by tank truck or tracked vehicle.

Health and social services

In 1965 the Québec government began to share the responsibility for health services with the federal government. Today Québec has taken over all the services, which it offers through the Conseil régional de la santé et des services sociaux Kativik (CRSSS Kativik). This organization was created by a National Assembly bill and is entirely funded by the Québec Ministère des Affaires sociales. Connected with the Kativik Regional Government, it ensures the coordination of health and social services for the Ungava and Hudson Bay hospitals.

The Ungava Hospital, which is located at Kuujjuaq, runs a community clinic in each of the seven villages along the coast of Ungava Bay; a second hospital was recently set up to serve communities located on the shores of Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait. A twenty-bed hospital is being built in Povungnituk. Each hospital also offers social services to satellite villages. First line hospital services are available in the community clinics and two hospitals; cases requiring more specialized care are sent to southern centres, usually in Québec City or Montréal.

Education

At the beginning of the 20th century, Anglican and Catholic missionaries offered the first school services to the Northern Québec Inuit. In 1949 the federal government opened its first school in Inukjuak (Port Harrisson), followed by those of Kuujjuarapik and Kuujjuaq in 1955 and the remainder at the end of the 1950s. Instruction was given in English only.

In 1964 the Direction générale du Nouveau-Québec began to assume the

responsibility for school services. The first three years of primary education were given in Inuktitut. Then, for the other years, children were taught in either English or French, depending on the choice of the parents. In 1965, an arts and crafts school opened in Kuujjuarapik. Inuit from all over the territory attended this vocational school up until 1973, when it closed.

Since 1978 each village has had a school where primary schooling and a portion of secondary schooling are given. Various adult education programmes are also offered to the aboriginal people. Education throughout the Inuit territory is under the responsibility of the Kativik School Board, which is run by a council consisting of commissioners elected by the residents of each village and a regional councilor appointed by the Kativik Regional Government. The local administration of each school is entrusted to a director who works in collaboration with an educational committee and a school principal.

Inuit students wishing to complete their secondary schooling and continue their studies must however go to schools, colleges or universities south of the territory, usually in southern Québec.

The Povungnituk and Ivujuvik dissidents run their own schools in accordance with a ruling issued by the Kativik School Board. A local school committee elected by the parents assumes the full responsibility for schooling.

Housing

When they were still nomads, the Inuit lived in tents during the summer and in igloos during the winter. The structure of the tent was mounted on wooden poles; caribou hides were laid around its sides, and thin sealskins through which light filtered were placed on the top. This type of dwelling was easily moved according to needs. On the other hand, the igloo was built with materials found on the spot. It was a matter of carving snow blocks of a well calculated shape. They were piled one on top of the other, sloping inwards to form a dome. A transparent block of ice placed on the same side as the door replaced one of the snow

Spring camp in Salluit.
Photo: Michel Gascon

blocks in order to allow the maximum amount of daylight in. An air hole was pierced at the top. Light was provided by a steatite lamp which burned oil extracted from animal fats.

As for housing, the Société d'habitation du Québec works in the sectors of building, restoring and managing low rental housing in cooperation with the Kativik Regional Government and municipalities. A housing renovation and building programme is now under way. Under the programme, some 125 housing units per year will be renovated or built between 1982 and 1986. The Société d'habitation du Québec establishes a maximum rent which depends on the type and size of the lodging and the tenant's income.

Clothing

Clothing was made in intensive fashion by the Inuit women during and immediately after the great fall hunts. Caribou hides, the main material used for clothing, were the best for making warm, resistant and waterproof clothes.

Skins of the different varieties of seals were also used, mainly for boots. Special cutting and manufacturing techniques resulted in waterproof boots.

The *atigi*, traditional men's coat, which was trimmed with wolf or dog fur, was made of skins and closed by a cord at the collar, wrapping the body in a layer of warm air. The pants were generally made of caribou skin as well, and often lined with fur. Summer coats were lighter weight.

The *amauti*, traditional women's coat, hung down both in front and back in two panels which offered the mother additional protection against the cold. An extension of the collar enabled her to keep her child against her, on her back, transferring her body heat to him for more protection against the cold. The inside of the coat was fitted with side pockets to support the child's feet. A huge hood covered both mother's and baby's heads.

Today the Inuit wear *atigi* and *amauti* which are still of the same shape, but they are made in two parts. The inside is flannelette, while the outside is made from a tight, waterproof fabric which cuts the wind. These coats are trimmed with embroidery and fur.

As for housing, the Société d'habitation du Québec works in the sectors of building, restoring and managing low rental housing in cooperation with the Kativik Regional Government and municipalities. A housing renovation and building programme is now under way. Under the programme, some 125 housing units per year will be renovated or built between 1982 and 1986. The Société d'habitation du Québec establishes a maximum rent which depends on the type and size of the lodgings and the tenant's income.

Transportation

In the past, the Inuit travelled by sea and river by *kayak* or *umiak*, individual or family-size boats which were made of wood covered with sealskins. They travelled overland on foot or by dogsled.

Today local travelling has been facilitated by snowmobiles (introducted in 1965) and motorcycles. Moreover, for water transportation they use motorboats and "peterheads", small coasters for trips to hunting and fishing grounds.

Every summer ships carry heavy equipment, petroleum products and unperishable food to the northern villages from St. Lawrence ports. They reach the shores of Hudson Strait, Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay after sailing round Eastern Québec and Labrador. Because of the harsh climate, the navigation period which begins in July is discontinued at the end of October.

There is no road link between this part of the territory and the rest of Québec, or joining the villages to one another. Flying is the only practical way to travel from one village to another, or to enter or leave the region. Modern airplanes carry passengers, fresh food and lightweight materials into the thirteen villages on a regular basis.

Two companies service the area — Nordair, which goes from Montréal or Québec City to Kuujjuarapik or Kuujjuaq, and Air Inuit, which flies to the various villages from Kuujjuaq or Kuujjuarapik.

Kuujjuarapik and Kuujjuaq have adequate airports and landing strips. Elsewhere, makeshift gravel or sand airstrips have to be used instead. A programme for building runways and airports and implementing air transport assistance services is to begin in 1984.

Communications

Until 1974 communication with the "Inuit Country" was difficult. Wireless telephone, short-wave radio and a very irregular postal service were the only means of contacting Northern Québec.

A community radio was introduced in Povungnituk in 1974, marking the beginnings of activities in the field of modern communications. Six years later every community had its own FM radio station.

Concurrently the Inuit wanted a communications system they could control. It proved necessary to develop an adequate means of communication and set up a network in order to link the communities to one another and give them improved entertainment and news. For this purpose Taqramiut Nipingat Inc., the first aboriginal communications corporation in Québec, was founded and equipped with studios for producing radio and television programmes in Salluit.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation transmits its radio and television programming into five Inuit communities by satellite. They receive two channels, one in French, and the other in English.

Back in Salluit these hunters are weighing the caribou at the co-op.
Photo: *Paul-Émile Roux*

Moreover, listeners can pick up one hour a day of broadcasting in Inuktitut; it is transmitted from Frobisher Bay or Yellowknife.

In the sphere of printed news, the Makivik Corporation produces a monthly magazine entitled *Taqralik*, in English and Inuktitut, which is distributed free of charge to the Inuit.

Local and long-distance telephone services and a regular postal service are now available in every community. Electricity is supplied by Hydro-Québec, in accordance with the general rates applicable throughout Québec.

Traditional subsistence activities

Throughout Inuit history, wildlife, both land and marine, has played a major role in the nation's survival. Depending on the season, the people hunted various species of seal, whale, caribou in the interior, and migratory birds; they fished for Arctic char, brook trout and salmon; they trapped Arctic fox and hare. The Inuit used their catches not only for food; they also made warm clothing out of the skins and tools from the walrus tusks and caribou antlers; the oils of certain animals were used for lighting... These activities were engaged in according to ancestral techniques which changed very little until permanent establishments were opened in Northern Québec.

Today the products from hunting, fishing and trapping are still valued by the Inuit and provide a good portion of their food and other needs. However, requirements and techniques have changed and taken on a more modern aspect.

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement has delimited land categories within the northern territory where the Inuit benefit from some exclusive hunting, fishing and trapping rights. The Inuit participate in wildlife management and conservation by sitting with government representatives on the Joint Committee on Hunting, Fishing and Trapping. The Agreement also provided for an Inuit assistance programme to support and develop the practice of those traditional activities. The northern village corporations manage activities, while the Kativik Regional Government administers the budget of the programme, which is funded by Québec's Ministère du Loisir, de la Chasse et de la Pêche.

Inuit cultural heritage

The Avataq Cultural Institute, which has its head office in Inukjuaq, was created on November 1, 1980. It is financially supported by the Makivik Corporation. Its plans and projects are numerous, dealing with several areas of Inuit culture — toponymy, writing of a history manual, creation of an Inuit cultural centre and museum, repatriation of traditional items made by the Inuit and exhibited in museums of Southern Québec or abroad, promotion of traditional literature, games and music, etc. Since it was created the Institute has been sponsoring an annual conference of elders with the purpose, among other things, of collecting the oral knowledge of the older Inuit so it can be passed on to the younger generation.

In Povungnituk, Sukaq, a local cultural organization, set up the Saputik Museum which is shaped like an igloo on the outside, while the inside is laid out so as to show visitors how people lived and how it was organized physically. An Inuktitut dictionary is also being compiled to help preserve the Inuit language and its instruction.

Other organizations promote the Inuit cultural heritage. Since its very beginnings the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec has looked after the marketing of Inuit art and handicraft items, some of which have acquired a

very high value on the international market. A sculpture identification system has been developed; it includes the craftsman's signature, a collection number and some syllabic characters engraved on the underside of the piece which determine its origin and make possible a check on its authenticity.

Traditionally the Inuit used such materials as ivory, bone, caribou antlers (tines, horns), to create their works which were generally small and easy to carry. Only a few articles — lamps, for instance — were made of steatite, a friable stone whose colour varied depending on its origin; its use became widespread only recently. Today bulkier and heavier sculptures can be produced. However, the sculptors' sources of inspiration have scarcely changed, and subjects are still drawn from mythology, legends, wildlife, day-to-day living and the natural environment.

Another type of traditional Inuit art is engraving which has developed mainly in the last 20 years. Throughout time the Inuit have engraved scenes from their daily lives or mythology on skins for their clothing and umiaq, or on ivory. Today drawings are engraved in stone and then reproduced on paper.

Sculpture and engraving are thus arts which allow Inuit values and part of the traditional Inuit knowledge to be passed on to the young people, while simultaneously spreading Inuit culture to the rest of Québec and throughout the world.

Nunaliit (The Villages)

Inuit toponymy is rich and closely related to traditional activities, legends, religious beliefs, land, water and wildlife elements, and history. Inuit place-names reflect man's relationship with his environment, as shown by the following:

Kangiqsualujjuaq, which is located 20 kilometres upstream from the mouth of the George River, means *very big bay*.

Mary Keleutak of Kangiqsujuaq is carrying her baby in the hood of her amauti, the traditional coat for women.
Photo: Michel Gascon

This village on the east coast of Ungava Bay has a population of 360, known as the Kangiqsualujjamiut*.

Kuujjuaq, *the great river*, is about 50 kilometres upstream from the Koksoak River, on its left bank. Formerly known as Fort Chimo, this locality has the largest population of all the northern villages — 916 Inuit and 236 others. Kuujjuaq is considered the administrative capital of the entire Ungava region.

At a distance of 110 kilometres to the northwest of Kuujjuaq, the village of Tasiujaq lies at the end of a deep bay in Lac aux Feuilles, on the north bank of Bérard River. For that matter, the word Tasiujaq means *which looks like a lake*. Its inhabitants, the Tasiujamiut, who number 115, see some of the highest tides in the world, reaching as much as 16 to 18 metres.

Aupaluk, whose name means *red place*, is the smallest of the northern villages; it used to be a traditional Inuit hunting camp. Its soil contains iron, whence its red colouring. Around 1960 the Inuit in the area were encouraged to settle in Kangirsuk, but from 1970 on, the people of Aupaluk put a great deal of effort into obtaining a permanent village. There are now 114 Aupalumiut, including four who are not Inuit, living in this village on the east coast of Hopes Advance Bay, only 80 kilometres south of Kangirsuk.

Kangirsuk, meaning *the bay*, was first known by the names of Payne Bay and Bellin. It is located on the banks of the Arnaud (Payne) River, near its mouth. There are 293 Kangirsumiut, and ten who are not Inuit, in this small village which was born in 1921 when Révillon Frères arrived.

The village of Quaqtaq, whose place-name means *which seems frozen*, lies on a peninsula jutting out into Hudson Strait and forming the east coastline of Diana

* The name of the people is obtained by adding the suffix *miut*, meaning *the people from, the inhabitants of*, to the place-name.

Povungnituk sculptor.
Photo: Gilles H. Picard

Young girl from Salluit.
Photo: *Paul-Émile Rioux*

Bay. The small population of 175 Quaqtamiut is settled in a cove called Mission Cove.

At a distance of 157 kilometres, Kangiqsujuaq, or *the big bay*, is in actual fact on the east shore of Wakeham Bay and bore its namesake until 1981; it was also known as Maricourt. Its population has increased fourfold in 40 years and now includes 330 Inuit and 13 others.

The site of the village of Salluit, *arid place*, lies in a valley with a north-south aspect, about 10 kilometres from the mouth of Salluit Fjord and 50 kilometres from the port of Déception and the mining development of Purtuniq. Today 650 people live there. In the past this village was called Saglouk, or Sugluk.

Ivujivik and its 220 Ivujivimiut are found about 120 kilometres further west. This place *where the ice floes accumulate* is the northernmost locality in Québec. This communiy lies at the end of a small cove, south of the Diggs Strait and Islands, near Cape Wolstenholme.

Akulivik, which means *place between two bays* in Inuktitut, lies on a peninsula jutting out into Hudson Bay, facing Smith Island. Inuit occupation of this ares goes back a long way, but the present village was officially created in 1975. Today 310 Akulivimiut live there.

Povungnituk, which was formerly called Puvirnituk, is on the right bank of the Povungnituk River, four kilometres from the bay of the same name. It means *place where there is a smell of rotten meat.* There are 836 Povungnitumiut living in this village on the east coast of Hudson Bay.

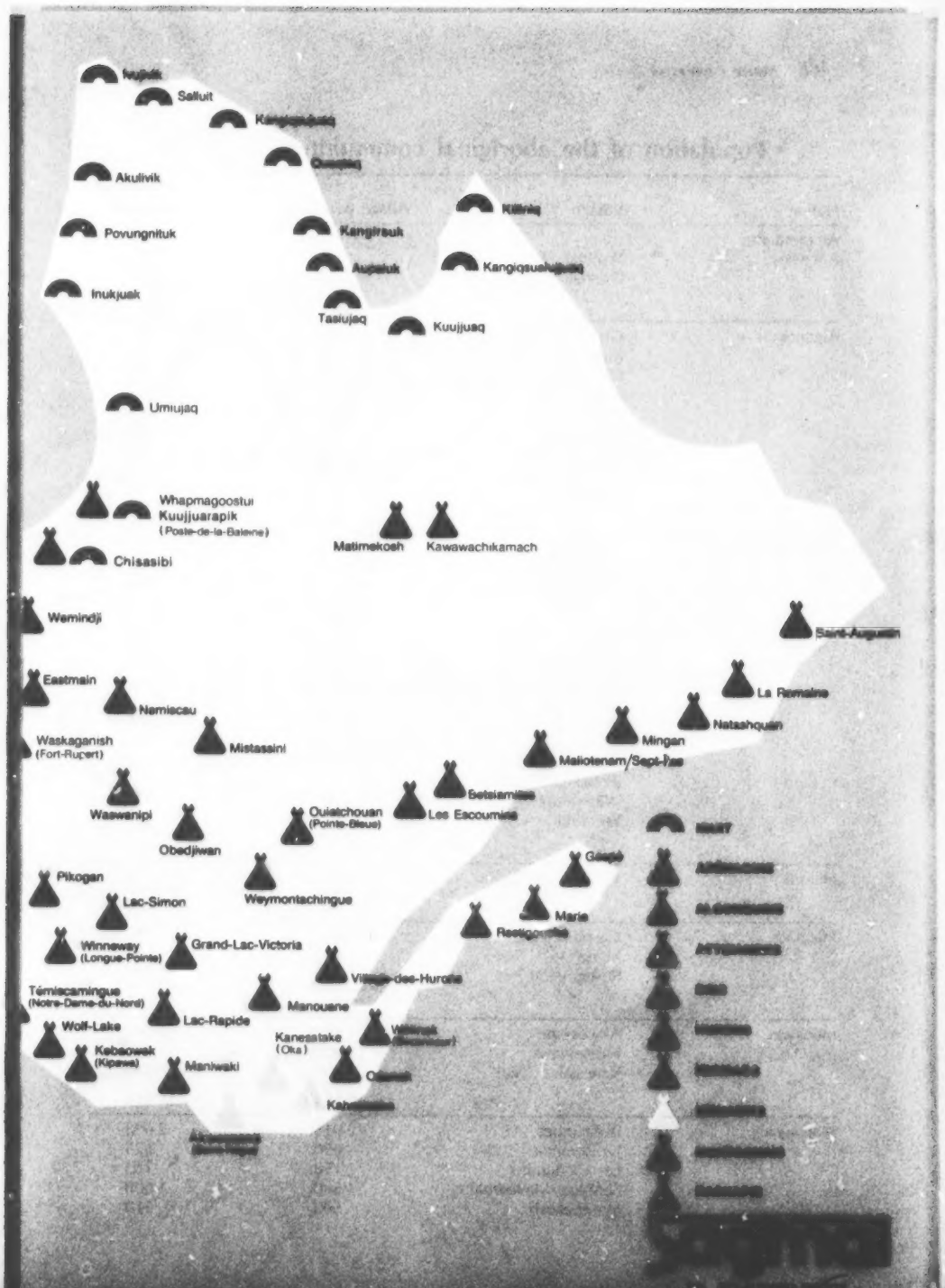
For a long time a meeting and trading place for the Inuit living in this region, and covering an expanse of over 100 kilometres, Inukjuak, *the giant*, is located at the mouth of the Innuksuak River. There is a deposit of steatite, which is used for sculpture, on the left bank of the river, near the first falls. The lifestyle of the 670 Inukjuamiut is closely tied to the practice of traditional activities.

Overnight camp near Povungnituk river.
Photo: Gilles H. Picard

Kuujjuarapik is located at the mouth of Great Whale River, about 48 kilometres south of the Manitounik Islands, in Hudson Bay. The place is also called Great Whale River, or again, Poste-de-la-Baleine. This locality has a population of 661 Inuit. Kuujjuarapik is the Inuit placename meaning *beautiful big river.*

In 1985 a new village a few kilometres to the north of Kuujjuarapik will be ready to receive some 400 Inuit already registered on the moving list. They will leave Kuujjuarapik to settle in Umiujaq, on land located on the northeast side of Lac Guillaume-Delisle and facing some of the Nastapoca Islands, in Hudson Bay. Umiujaq means *which looks like a beard.* It is in this region that the Kuujjuarapik Inuit chose their hunting and fishing territories under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

TAIMA! (THE END)


Salluit
Akulivik
Povungnituk
Inukjuak
Umiujaq
Whapmagoostui
Kuujjuarapik
(Poste-de-la-Baleine)
Chisasibi
Wemindji
Eastmain
Nemiscau
Waskaganish
(Fort-Rupert)
Mistassini
Waswanipi
Obedjiwan
Pikogan
Lac-Simon
Weymontachingue
Winneway
(Longue-Pointe)
Grand-Lac-Victoria
Témiscamingue
(Notre-Dame-du-Nord)
Lac-Rapide
Manouane
Wolf-Lake
Kebaowek
(Kipawa)
Maniwaki
Kanesatake
(Oka)
Kahnawake
Tasiujaq
Kuujjuaq
Matimekosh
Kawawachikamach
Betsiamites
Les Escoumins
Ouiatchouan
(Pointe-Bleue)
Mingan
Natashquan
La Romaine
Saint-Augustin
Gaspé
Marie
Restigouche

• Population of the aboriginal communities in Québec

Nation	Village	Village population	Total population of the band
Amerindians:			
Abenakis	Wôlinak (Bécancour)	80	100
	Odanak	204	679
		284	**779**
Algonquins	Grand-Lac-Victoria	300	300
	Kipawa	196	204
	Lac-Rapide	255	295
	Lac-Simon	560	675
	Winneway	235	345
	Maniwaki	1 000	1 200
	Témiscamingue	355	464
	Pikogan	350	479
	Wolf Lake	68	68
		3 319	**4 030**
Attikameks	Manouane	1 032	1 126
	Obedjiwan	1 200	1 400
	Weymontachingue	654	675
		2 886	**3 201**
Crees	Chisasibi	1 940	1 999
	Eastmain	326	381
	Waskaganish (Fort-Rupert)	1 282	1 362
	Mistassini	1 951	2 286
	Nemiscau	131	131
	Whapmagoostui (Poste-de-la-Baleine)	395	416
	Waswanipi	580	989
	Wemindji	753	853
		7 378	**8 417**
Hurons	Village-des-Hurons	800	1 250
		800	**1 250**
Micmacs	Gaspé	155	155
	Maria	450	500
	Restigouche	1 505	2 000
		2 110	**2 655**
Mohawks	Akwesasne	3 395	3 580
	Kahnawake	5 000	6 000
	Kanestake (Oka)	800	915
		9 195	**10 495**
Montagnais	Betsiamites	2 018	2 098
	La Romaine	690	825
	Les Escoumins	150	180
	Sept-Îles/Mallotenam	1 600	1 600
	Matimekosh	500	510

Nation	Village	Village population	Total population of the band
	Mingan	323	326
	Natashquan	439	447
	Ouiatchouan	1 500	1 965
	Saint-Augustin	139	139
		7 359	**8 090**
Naskapis	Kawawachikamach	400	415
		400	**415**
Total Amerindian population:		**33 231**	**39 332**

	Village	Inuit population	Non-aboriginal population
Inuit	Akulivik	310	7
	Aupaluk	114	4
	Inukjuak	670	30
	Ivujivik	220	5
	Kangirsualujjuaq	360	12
	Kangiqsujuaq	330	13
	Kangirsuk	293	10
	Kuujjuaq	916	236
	Kuujjuarapik	661	150
	Povungnituk	836	40
	Quaqtaq	175	4
	Salluit	650	30
	Tasiujaq	115	6
Total Inuit population:		**5 650**	**547**
Total aboriginal population:		***44 982**	

* It is estimated that there are 15 000 other persons of aboriginal descent in Québec who are not included in these figures.

Source: SAGMAI, 1984-03-15

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